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HEBBEL'S NIBELUNGEN



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HEBBEL'S NIBELUNGEN

ITS SOURCES, METHOD, AND STYLE

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

NOTE

OF the many writers who have attempted to make use in modern literature of the motives and action of the old story of the Nibelungs, which is to the Germanic people, as William Morris long ago pointed out, their true 'Tale of Troy,' none has been more successful in its actual rejuvenescence than has Hebbel, in his dramatic trilogy "Die Nibelungen." On this account, and because of the place which it relatively occupies among Hebbel's works, the drama undoubtedly offers an interesting field for investigation. The question of the genesis and growth of the trilogy has elsewhere been considered, but nobody until now has exhaustively examined the sources of the material and the attitude of the author in his use of it. The present monograph has been undertaken at a time when increased attention is being directed to Hebbel and his work, and is, in my opinion, a distinctly valuable contribution to the rapidly growing amount of Hebbel literature.

WILLIAM H. CARPENTER.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, May, 1906.

PREFACE

THE following study was undertaken at the suggestion of Professor Calvin Thomas. Since its inception many valuable additions have been made to Hebbel literature, notable beyond all others the editions of Hebbel's works, journals, and letters by Professor R. M. Werner, which have opened the way for further investigations. Even a few years ago, Hebbel had but a small circle of admirers, of critics, who appreciated the significance of his genius. Now he is beginning to come into his own as one of the three greatest German dramatists of the nineteenth century. And, as the ripest product of his genius and one of the few dramatic versions of the Nibelungen saga which has found favor on the stage,¹ Hebbel's "Nibelungen" offers an interesting field for investigation into its sources and workmanship.²

It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to all of my instructors, and particularly to thank Professors W. H. Carpenter and Calvin Thomas of Columbia University for assistance and encouragement in this work. I desire, also, to express my thanks to Professor Richard M. Werner of the University of Lemberg, Austria, and to Professor William Addison Hervey of Columbia University for valuable advice and suggestions.

NEW YORK, March 30, 1906.

¹ From October 1902, to October 1903, the first two parts of the trilogy were played in Germany thirty times, the third part twenty times; from 1863 to 1895, the first two parts were played at the Burgtheater, Vienna, forty-five times, the third part seventeen times.

² The only works on Hebbel which have thus far been written in English are the doctor's dissertation of Henrietta Becker on Kleist and Hebbel and the text edition of "Herodes und Mariamne" by Edward Stockton Meyer, in which the editor gives a brief biography of Hebbel and a survey of his works.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Akv.	Atlakviða.
Alv.	Alvíssmǫl.
Am.	Atlamǫl.
Bdr.	Baldrsdraumar.
Braunfels . . .	Braunfels, Nibelungenlied (translation).
Brs.	Brot af Sigurðarkviðu.
Bugge	Bugge, Edda (edition).
Busch	Busch, Deutscher Volksglaube.
Bw. (I. II.) . .	Friedrich Hebbels Briefwechsel, Bamberg.
C.	Nibelunglied, manuscript C, Zarncke edition.
Dr.	Drap Niflunga.
Fouqué	Fouqué, Der Held des Nordens.
Fj.	Fjölsvinsmǫl.
Fm.	Fáfnesmǫl.
Frankl	Frankl, Zur Biographie Friedrich Hebbels.
Geibel	Geibel, Brunhild.
Gering	Gering, Edda (translation).
Gl.	Gylfaginning.
Golther	Golther, Die sagengeschichtlichen Grundlagen der Ringdichtung Richard Wagners.
Grimm	Grimm, Deutsche Mythologie.
Grm.	Grímnismǫl.
Grp.	Grípesspá.
Gþr. (I. II. III.)	Göþrúnarkviða.
Hdl.	Hyndluljóð.
H. H. (I. II.) . .	Helgakviða Hundingsbana.
HHv.	Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar.
Hlr.	Helreið Brynhildar.
Hqv.	Hólvamǫl.
Hrbl.	Harbarðsljóð.
Hym.	Hymeskviða.
J.	Jónsson, Edda (edition).
K. R.	Hebbel, Kriemhilds Rache.
Kuh	Kuh, Biographie Friedrich Hebbels.
Kulke	Kulke, Erinnerungen an Friedrich Hebbel.
Ls.	Lokasenna.
Meyer	Meyer, Deutsche Volkskunde.
Nachl. (I. II.) .	Friedrich Hebbels Briefe. Nachlese, Werner.

Nl.	Nibelungenlied, Lachmann edition.
Nn.	Hebbel, Die Nibelungen.
Norn.	Nornagestsþátttr.
Od.	Oddrúnargrátr.
Raupach	Raupach, Der Nibelungen-Hort.
Rm.	Regensmål.
Rþ.	Rígsþula.
Sd.	Sigrdrífomål.
Sf.	Fra dauða Sinfjötla.
Sfl.	Siegfriedslied.
Sg.	Sigurþarkviða en skamma.
Simrock	Simrock, Nibelungenlied (translation).
Sk.	Skáldskaparmál.
Skm.	Skírnesmål.
S. T.	Hebbel, Siegfrieds Tod.
Tgb.	Hebbels Tagebücher, Werner.
Thidr.	Thidrekssaga.
Vischer	Vischer, Kritische Gänge.
Vkv.	Völundarkviða.
Vs.	Völsungasaga.
Vors.	Vorspiel.
Vsp.	Völuspó.
W. (I.-XII.) . .	Hebbels Werke, Werner.
Wagner	Wagner, Der Ring des Nibelungen.
Weinhold . . .	Weinhold, Altnordisches Leben.
Wuttke	Wuttke, Der deutsche Volksaberglaube der Gegenwart.

The references to the various manuscripts of Hebbel's "Nibelungen" are the same as those used by Werner, W. IV. 341-344.

HEBBEL'S NIBELUNGEN

CHAPTER I

GENESIS OF HEBBEL'S "NIBELUNGEN"

JUST two centuries before the publication of the first, incomplete text of the Nibelungenlied, Hans Sachs, the great cobbler-bard of the sixteenth century, who sought themes for his two hundred and eight dramas in every field of fact and fancy, published his play, "Der hürnen Seufrid." The drama drew its material from the two versions of the Nibelungen saga which he knew; the first five acts are based upon the "Lied vom hürnen Seyfrid,"¹ the sixth act is based upon the Rosengarten, with probably a third source for the seventh act which contains an account of Siegfried's death by Hagen's hand, while he is asleep beside a spring.² Here the dramatic impulse toward the old saga-world of the Nibelungen begins, and here the use of the Siegfriedslied and Rosengarten as the basis for an entire drama ends. But this work is only an isolated production, and does not show a general interest in the old material.

Foreign rule, foreign taste and influence, deadened the national self-consciousness, and it required an awakened spirit of independence to arouse interest in the great national saga. Not until the Norse songs and sagas were being edited, and the Middle High German version of the Nibelungen story had been published in complete form, did the material again attract a dramatic poet to the work of re-creation. But since Fouqué, in 1803, published in Friedrich Schlegel's *Europa*, the dramatic scene, "Der gehörnte Siegfried in der Schmiede,"³ not a decade of the nineteenth century has been without its versions of the saga. Most of these attempts at rejuvenation have been in the

¹ Printed in Nuremberg about 1530.

² "Der hürnen Seufrid," Halle, 1880, pp. iii. f.

³ From the "Lied vom hürnen Seyfrid."

form of dramas; among the epic versions are the two noteworthy ones by Jordan and Morris; while at least four attempts have been made in opera, exclusive of Wagner's music-drama.

No other story has so widely attracted and enlisted the creative efforts of German poets as that of the Nibelungs, no other poem has aroused so greatly the interest of scholars, writers, and public, as the *Nibelungenlied*. The cause for the tremendous and lasting impulse towards this half-buried saga treasure is not far to seek. The reawakened national consciousness sought national material; the *Nibelungenlied* is a poem with but few positive historical features, yet absolutely belonging to the race, with setting and characters truly German; a poem which invited the research of students and which aroused the creative interest of poets with the desire to remould the old saga into a form that should appeal to a modern audience. And since most of the adapters recognized the dramatic spirit of the old epic, and, indeed, of the old saga as a whole, and since the stage offers the most direct form of appeal to the public, nearly all the attempts to recast and arrange the material have been in dramatic form. Even after the northern versions of the saga had become available through translation, the majority of the dramatic poets based their work upon the southern version as more direct in its appeal to people of the nineteenth century.

A list of the various attempts to raise the buried Nibelungen hoard to modern view is remarkable rather for its length than for the number of important names which are included among the authors. Poetasters as well as poets, and unskilled more than skilled hands, have tried their powers to lift the alluring treasure. Even now, scarcely more than a half-dozen of the various attempts are known as worthy poetical productions; a century from now the numerous other versions will at most arouse an historical interest on the part of the investigator. The names of Fouqué, Wagner, Geibel, Hebbel, Jordan, and Morris will always be connected with the part that they played in rejuvenating the old saga, but of these real literary and human interest will probably continue to attach alone to the music-drama of Richard Wagner, "*Der Ring des Nibelungen*," to the trilogy of Friedrich Hebbel, "*Die Nibelungen*," and to the epic

of William Morris, "The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs."

Each of these three poets had a frankly different attitude toward his material, and a different ideal and purpose in creation. Wagner, always with the thought of music uppermost, wished to go back to Germanic origins for his saga material, to express simple man in his relation to Gods and nature; and he aimed to make the whole story evolve from his favorite theme, redemption through love. Morris was solely inspired by the Norse sources, which he knew so thoroughly. He was imbued with the spirit of Norse poetry and saga-lore, and he attempted to interpret and enlarge its greatest story for modern readers, basing his work almost exclusively on the Volsunga-saga. Hebbel's undertaking took for its basis the South German saga form. For the pure drama, he felt that the figures of the Middle High German epic were nearest to a modern audience in human interest, and his sole desire was to interpret them.

The purpose of the investigation, the results of which are set down in the following pages, has been to trace Hebbel's sources in the composition of the "Nibelungen," and to point out the nature and extent of his indebtedness, his attitude toward his material, and the use which he made of it. Hebbel's own careful letters and his exact record of details in his journal must always be of first importance in studying the origin of his works and the time and manner of their composition. Professor Werner, in his excellent introduction to the critical edition of the "Nibelungen," has carefully given the account of Hebbel's progress in the composition of the work, so that it is necessary here only to summarize the genesis and growth of the trilogy, and to add a few details concerning its development from a youthful dream to a lasting monument of Hebbel's creative genius.

Not until a goodly number of dramas owned Hebbel as their author, not until he had seen Christine Enghaus' representation of Chriemhild in Raupach's "Nibelungen-Hort," did he seriously think of the work of production, and more than six years elapsed between the time when Hebbel wrote the first words of the "Nibelungen," and the date of its publication. Although

the period of composition lasted from October 1855 to March 22d, 1860, the actual work of production covered a space of but a few months. As in the case of most of Hebbel's creative work, the composition of the "Nibelungen" was done at fever heat; periods of rapid and enthusiastic achievement were followed by intervals of lassitude and inertia, or by periods of equally intense work on other material, when the "Nibelungen" would be neglected and almost forgotten.

In the course of his progress on the work, his plans changed as to the nature and length of his composition, and it was only after he had been forced to see the lack of feasibility of doing justice to his material in a shorter space, after he had completed "Siegfrieds Tod," that he felt himself compelled to decide on a trilogy. By the 18th of February, 1857, he had completed what is now the Prologue and "Siegfrieds Tod." He regarded the work with artistic satisfaction, and was content with the clean manuscript, with scarcely a word erased. In his journal for that date he recorded that he looked with an absolutely quiet æsthetic conscience at the whole, as well as at the detail, and he recalled that moment when he first drank in the glories of the old epic, a moment which he later so beautifully recorded in his dedication to the trilogy.¹

Not until the fall of 1859, did a sojourn in Dresden and a conversation with Hettner lead him to return to the work of which he had not thought for two years. Suddenly "Kriemhilds Rache" opened before him in startling clearness, and he hastened home to begin the work with such a storm of dramatic impulse as he had not experienced since the writing of "Genoveva,"² and which made the work of production his greatest happiness on earth.³ The first three acts were composed at this fever heat, and were finished on the 17th of December.⁴

On the last day of the year, Hebbel wrote to Hettner in appreciative acknowledgment of his inspiration to further work. "How should I excuse the fact that I left your good letter so long without an answer, except by work on the Nibelungen, of which you yourself think so kindly? It did not loose

¹ Tgb. IV. 5555; cf. Bw. I. 345, 57, 239.

² Bw. II. 484.

³ Bw. II. 387, 57; Nachl. II. 117.

⁴ Tgb. IV. 5774; Bw. II. 183.

its grasp of me until a few days ago, or rather I tore myself loose from it, now that Volcker and Hagen have mounted the night guard, at the end of the third act.”¹

Sorrow and illness interrupted his work at this point, yet the fourth act was ready by the 7th of March, 1860,² and with work once renewed, the excitement of creative activity laid hold upon him again, and on the 22d of March he wrote the last verses of the trilogy.³

The Prologue and “Siegfrieds Tod” were already well known among Hebbel’s friends; he had sent the manuscript to Laube, the theatre director at Vienna, in 1858, though without the desired results,⁴ and Hebbel felt that this work, like all his other dramas, was excluded from the stage there on account of hostile personal relations, rather than from reasons growing out of the works themselves.⁵ Now he hastened to herald his completed trilogy. On the 10th of April, he sent it to the Princess Hohenlohe, whose judgment he awaited with a real anxiety born of his respect for her critical insight,⁶ and on the 1st of May he despatched it with a letter to Franz von Dingelstedt, who had long looked forward to the presentation of the play in Weimar. Until then Hebbel’s wife and the princess were the only persons who knew this third part, “Kriemhilds Rache.”⁷

In sending the manuscript to Stern, Hebbel wrote, “In this work are the best hours of the last five years of my life, and the studies of a decade and a half. Since now, besides this, I have the most advantageous material, I should even look toward immediate success with some confidence, if the literary criticism of the day were not governed by principles which stand in the most decided opposition to all poetry.”⁸

But Vienna, as usual, offered a serious obstacle in the way of the desired success through the stage, and at first the poet had to rely entirely upon the resources of the Weimar theatre to bring

¹ Cited by Dr. H. H. Houben, *Vossische Zeitung*, Jan. 8, 1905.

² Tgb. IV. 5789.

³ *Ibid.* 5798, 5846; cf. Bw. II. 61 f., 272, 473, 554.

⁴ Nachl. II. 106; cf. Bw. II. 47, wrongly dated Oct. 5, 1857, instead of 1859.

⁵ *Ibid.* 119, cf. 141.

⁷ Bw. II. 61.

⁶ Bw. II. 488.

⁸ *Ibid.* 508.

his trilogy before the public, for Franz Dingelstedt was the first director to stage the "Nibelungen." Hebbel regarded the undertaking with distrust, on account of the meagre forces of the Weimar theatre, and he at first refused to come from Vienna for the performance.¹ Dingelstedt, too, feared the ten men's rôles, but was determined to venture the undertaking. At the Grand Duke's command, Hebbel was present to see the performance of "Der Gehörnte Siegfried" and "Siegfrieds Tod" on January 31st, 1861. His journal tells nothing of the presentation, until the closing entry for the year, when he recorded the pronounced success of the first two pieces, "the greatest marks of honor on the part of the court, about which the letters to my wife contain details."²

On the 2d of February, he wrote to his wife of the prosperous issue of the performance. He had arrived in time to attend the last rehearsal, and to correct certain mistakes of his copyist, Lettfass. "The success of the production was indubitable; attention, and gravelike stillness, as though it dealt with the future instead of the past, and a pitch of feeling so firmly sustained that not even the dwarfs with their horrible humps and long noses aroused the slightest laughter. After the finale, I was summoned by the Grand Duke to his box, and he thanked me heartily, as did the Grand Duchess."³ On the evening of the 2d, he read the first and last acts of "Kriemhilds Rache" to the court and the élite of Weimar, joining the two acts by a connecting scene and oral comment. The effect was extraordinary; the Grand Duke was a most attentive listener and enthusiastic in his praise.⁴

In May, Hebbel made a second journey to Weimar, this time with his wife, who impersonated Brunhild on the first evening, May 16th, and Kriemhild on the second evening, May 18th, when "Kriemhilds Rache" was played for the first time. Again, the closing entry in his journal for 1861 tells us of this performance. The Grand Duke had directly appealed to the Emperor, at Liszt's suggestion, and had obtained by this means leave of absence for Christine Hebbel to play in Weimar. The effect of

¹ Bw. II. 69, 458.

² Nachl. II. 140 f.

³ Tgb. IV. 5947.

⁴ *Ibid.* II. 142.

the "Nibelungen" was extraordinary and Christine's performance powerful.¹

Berlin and Schwerin followed the example of the Weimar theatre, but not until the 19th of February, 1863, did the Burg-theater in Vienna finally produce the Prologue and "Siegfrieds Tod." On the 31st of December, 1862, Hebbel noted with delight in his journal the sure appearance of the "Nibelungen" in Vienna in the near future.² He attended the rehearsals, and aided them with his careful suggestions. At the first, he felt that he was not yet in the kitchen, but only in the courtyard where the vegetables are cleaned; and he had a "feeling of looking over a proof-sheet that teems with printer's errors, which for the most part have no sense, but sometimes, too, an extremely ludicrous sense, at which the author himself has to laugh."³ The fourth rehearsal, he attended on the 14th of February;⁴ on the 17th, next to the last rehearsal. "For the first evening," he recorded, "no one is especially anxious, the question is merely whether a fifth, a tenth, a fifteenth will follow. That depends upon whether the piece is given time to justify itself, and I could almost believe in the good will of the directorate."⁵

On the 19th, the Prologue and "Siegfrieds Tod" were really produced on the Vienna stage to which Hebbel had looked with such longing, and with the feeling that Vienna must give the decision.⁶ Hebbel did not attend the performance. He felt that he would have been a second Saint Sebastian, for he was as sensitive to looks as to darts, and he could not be on the stage without wearing evening clothes and kid gloves. This appealed to him the less, since it would show too great confidence and assurance, and since the coat would turn into a veritable shirt of Nessus if it was not wanted by the third or fourth act. So he took his usual walk, and waited at home until his wife and daughter, with Glaser, came and announced a complete success. On the 20th, he saw the piece himself, and joyfully reported in his journal a crowded house, "great attention, not even laughter

¹ Tgb. IV. 5947.

² *Ibid.* 6052.

³ *Ibid.* 6078.

⁴ Tgb. IV. 6080.

⁵ *Ibid.* 6083.

⁶ Cf. Bw. II. 281; Nachl. II. 219.

over the imitation of the birds' voices." ¹ At the third presentation, on the 23d, the house was again full, the audience as attentive as during mass, and all seats already sold for the fourth performance. ² On the 28th, he recorded the fourth performance, with a house fuller than ever before. But Hebbel was again suspicious of the good will of the management, and angry at Laube for declaring that the "Nibelungen" was no drama, and was only retained on the stage on account of the portrayal of Kriemhild. Hebbel recorded no further performance than the tenth on the 18th of June, although the first two parts were produced again, once in September, and twice in November, 1863. ³ But the poet did not live to see a performance of the entire trilogy upon the Vienna stage.

Hebbel's delight and surprise at the stage success of his latest work found expression in a letter to a critic friend in which he wrote of its reception in Weimar, Schwerin, Berlin, and Vienna, and added: "These are the facts, . . . what is their reason? Is it the fresh, healthy atmosphere which still streams from the old epic into my rendering? Is the national sense at last awakening in the German nation, and making it love to tarry with the struggles and combats of its ancestors?" ⁴

At first, the printing of the "Nibelungen" was delayed because Hebbel had no suitable publisher in view. The *Jahrbuch Deutscher Belletristik*, edited by Siegfried Kapper, in Prague, had published "Die Nibelungen. Eine Tragödie von Friedrich Hebbel. Erster Act. Erste Scene," in 1856; that is, lines 52-265 of the present drama, and Westermann's *Jahrbuch der illustrierten Deutschen Monatshefte* for the year 1861 had printed "Die Werbung. Fragment aus Friedrich Hebbels Nibelungen," which includes verses 797-940, ⁵ but except for these small portions of the text, the trilogy remained for some time in manuscript form. In October 1861, Hebbel made a trip to Hamburg and there, after considerable delay, sold the "Nibelungen" to Campe with the condition that Hebbel retained the right to include the drama in the complete edition of

¹ Tgb. IV. 6084.

² *Ibid.* 6087.

³ *Ibid.* 6163, and note.

⁴ March 30, 1863, *Vossische Zeitung*, Jan. 8, 1905.

⁵ Cf. W. IV. 345.

his works.¹ The printing began in January 1862, in Vienna, under Campe's nephew, A. Holzhausen, to whom Hebbel gave the manuscript in December 1861.

On the 29th of January, he wrote to Campe that he had just corrected the first sheets of "Kriemhilds Rache." "This much is certain, I have never spent so much work on a production as on this; I cannot have done with it, it hangs fast to me like a polyp with a thousand arms, and so at least I do not let industry and toil be wanting, but test every verse as the money changer does a ducat."²

On the 31st of January, 1862, Hebbel could write to Adolf Stern, that the last proof of the volume lay before him. On the 29th of February, he sent to Campe the "prologue or epilogue," which the latter had demanded, but which was left unprinted. This is presumably the foreword, "An den geneigten Leser," which appears in all collected editions of Hebbel's works. The printing was at this time entirely finished, and Hebbel wrote to Campe with mock delight his joy in being at last author of a two-volume work.³ On the 10th of November, 1863, one month before his death, Hebbel experienced the happiness of being the first poet to receive the Schiller prize for the best drama in three years.

The "Nibelungen" called forth a storm of criticism, particularly after the work appeared in book form, but it won over to Hebbel some of the critics who had formerly been most severe in their attitude toward him. In Weimar sounded the first praise, since in Weimar the piece first became public. The Grand Duke was enthusiastic in his expressions of admiration to Hebbel: "I consider the Nibelungen the highest literary production in Germany since Goethe and Schiller; as a German prince I am proud that such a work could appear in my time, and rejoice with all my heart that I was permitted to hear it first"; and, to Hebbel's deprecating remark that he was only the interpreter of one higher, he replied, "You interpret yourself," and Councillor Schöll, previously an opponent of Hebbel, added, "At least, there is no other interpreter like you in the

¹ Tgb. IV. 5947. 75; cf. Nachl. II. 168.

² Nachl. II. 204.

³ *Ibid.* 207.

world.”¹ And Privy Councillor Vogel, Goethe’s physician, extravagantly exclaimed to him at the court ball, “Here is more than Goethe; he himself would have said: I say, Vogel, that is a fellow, he could crush your ribs to pieces.”² Schöll later wrote an article on the “Nibelungen” for the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* which, however, was refused and its place taken, as Hebbel wrathfully declared, by “two lines of praise, in order to give an opportunity to add, in a note, a half page of perfidious misrepresentations,”³ and he recorded in his journal that Baron von Cotta had excused himself for not publishing Schöll’s criticism on the grounds that he did not want to arouse Geibel further, and antagonize him, for he was already so dissatisfied and scarcely respected decorum.⁴

Dingelstedt had written his approval of the first parts of the trilogy in 1859, two months after Hebbel had sent the manuscript to Weimar, and he had urged him to hasten the completion of “Kriemhilds Rache.” “You have sent me, dear friend, a most excellent work, in which poet and material so completely supplement each other that a really wonderful total impression is produced. Not enough that you pick out of the broad epic shell the dramatic kernel clean and round, you assimilate so forcefully the subject which still lies far from us that it ceases to be alien to us; we can live with these knights, we understand them, they are even stageworthy. Thus even the theatrical effect is beyond all doubt; a few unimportant omissions and the piece can be staged. Yes, you have treated the questionable incident of the bridal-night mystery, a terror for all modest muses, with infinitely greater tenderness, discretion, and purity than all your pious and ‘temperate’ predecessors.”⁵ The last part of the trilogy pleased him less. He feared that Kriemhild, from the standpoint of the theatre public, would lose in interest on the second evening, while she stood in the foreground on the first. Then, too, the lack of progressive action, of movement, of tension, would be pointed out. But he recognized that a conclusion could be nothing but a conclusion, and he hoped much

¹ Nachl. II. 143.

² Tgb. IV. 5947.

³ Nachl. II. 250 f.

⁴ Tgb. IV. 6037.

⁵ Bw. II. 58.

from the scenic picture which the fifth act would make, with its grandeur and its somewhat epic breadth.¹

Eduard Kulke, who, to a certain extent, replaced Emil Kuh as a disciple of Hebbel during the last years of the poet's life, and who had heard Hebbel read "Kriemhilds Rache," though without knowing the first two parts of the trilogy, was so overpowered by the impression that he could not give utterance to a sound. "In reality, the effect was so mighty, so overwhelming, that I should have seemed to myself small and ridiculous, had I wanted then to attempt to give words to the impression."²

Hettner, too, was hearty in his praise. "It would be presumptuous," he wrote, "were I to pronounce a fixed judgment now, after the first impression. For to-day, I confine myself simply to an expression of my heartiest thanks to you for the great pleasure which you have given me. What poet can imitate the great forms of Hagen and Kriemhild, this fierce energy and this ungovernable passion! Then, too, I find the laconic nigardliness which you have retained in the Nibelungen characters excellent; Siegfried is especially masterly in this respect. The historic background, the way in which these heroes are healthy heathen and only unwillingly adjust themselves to the customs of Christianity, has something of the original power of things; you have succeeded here in gaining powerful motives. Only occasionally — you will permit an old friend this question — it seemed to me in the last piece that the epic had not entirely gone over into the dramatic. But I will first await renewed reading in book form, which I hope will soon appear, before I consider this opinion as grounded or repudiated."³ Hebbel replied in frank acceptance of this criticism, "You are very right that in Kriemhilds Rache the epic has not everywhere gone over into the dramatic, especially not, I think, in the second act. But it does not disturb on the stage, if one only cuts vigorously."⁴

Friedrich von Uechtritz, like Dingelstedt, had known the Prologue and "Siegfrieds Tod" before the third part of the trilogy was written. Hebbel had sent him the first scene when it appeared in the *Jahrbuch Deutscher Belletristik*, and with it the scenes from Geibel's "Brunhild," which appeared in the

¹ Bw. II. 62.

² *Ibid.* 541.

³ *Ibid.* 391 f.

⁴ *Ibid.* 393.

same volume. Uechtritz found Volker's account of Brunhild especially beautiful, but at Siegfried's entrance he felt the difficulty of dramatizing the old poem in the naïve grandeur and yet elastic indefiniteness of its outlines. He feared that Siegfried's challenge to Gunther to fight with him for his kingdom had attained a different and a less naïvely heroic character through the more definite, motivated expression which the drama gave it, and that it had lost in heroic naturalness. But his chief objection was to Hebbel's representation of Hagen as a character utterly out of sympathy with all Christian observances.¹ This criticism of Uechtritz convinced Hebbel that he had made a mistake in printing a fragment, and he sent his friend at once a part of the concluding scene in the cathedral, after Siegfried's death, which satisfied Uechtritz that Hebbel was not incorporating too strong a hatred of Christianity in the characters of his drama.²

When the trilogy was printed, Hebbel sent a copy to this old friend, and Uechtritz replied with a long letter of criticism in which he questioned certain lines that were not clear to him, or that he thought needed explanation. "But these little difficulties," he wrote, "(especially at the second reading, where their number was notably decreased with penetrating comprehension) can come into but minor consideration before the powerful total impression of your poem. To note at once, cursorily, what I most admire, I mention, before all else, the form of Hagen, so largely conceived and carried out, then the masterly manner in which you have succeeded in solving the extremely difficult task of the dramatic grouping of the long battle in the second part (which in itself is so much the rather epic and undramatic); further, the tragic impression of fidelity with which the Nibelungen — especially the very engaging figure of Giseler — flock about the sinister Hagen. You have also succeeded most admirably in the entire fantastic and romantic part of the poem, the conception and delineation of Brunhild, that of the dwarfs, the Huns, and so forth." He praised Hebbel's inventions and additions, and the manner in which he had overcome many difficulties presented by the poem. And he assured him that every objection which could be made

¹ Bw. II. 240 f.

² *Ibid.* 247 f.

in the matter of details disappeared in the deeply tragic effect of the whole.¹

Ludwig August Frankl, the editor of the Vienna *Sonntagsblätter*, and a friend of Hebbel, was, according to his own account, less enthusiastic in his praise of Hebbel's last drama. He told the poet that he did not place it above his "Judith," his "Maria Magdalena," and his "Herodes und Mariamne." He explained to him his point of view by imagining a sculptor who took the figures of a relief and translated them into statuary. That is, he considered the forms and the actions of the old epic too definitely and skilfully given to allow a scope for real creative art in bringing them into the realm of drama. Of "Kriemhilds Rache," only the first act seemed to him carried out with a force equal to that in "Siegfrieds Tod," a fault which he attributed to the increasing dramatic intractability of the material.²

On his trip to England, in the summer of 1862, Hebbel passed through Stuttgart, and there saw Eduard Mörike, to whom he had sent a copy of the "Nibelungen." Hebbel's journal records Mörike's expressed opinion: "With your Nibelungen it seemed to me as though suddenly a piece of rock had fallen through the roof. There is the sofa, there I lay, there I felt the thrill which is only called forth by that which is great and at the same time beautiful, there I felt the cobweb threads creeping over my face and cried out time after time: and such a man considers you worthy to send you such a work?"³

Gervinus, the historian of literature, wrote in appreciative praise of Hebbel, compared with other dramatists of his time: "At the first glance into the Prologue," he declared, "it must forcibly impress every one who has in mind the mass of dramatic works of most recent time, what an almost surprising contrast this fulness of matter, of comprehensible features, of tangible actions, forms to the wonted rhetorical delineation which, in the principal work of the dramatist, his characterization, usually does not go beyond the empty words." But Gervinus was not convinced that the figures of the old epic could be brought on the stage, and though he did not express this opinion as final, we have no record of a more thorough

¹ Bw. II. 286-288.

² Frankl. 47 f.

³ Tgb. IV. 6038.

criticism of the trilogy after he had completed reading the second part.¹

Klaus Groth, the Holstein poet, who stood in most friendly relations with Hebbel, wrote: "I read your *Nibelungen* in May. It has taken hold of me, and refreshed me. Serious work in the field of art does one good in itself, not looking to the right nor the left, not casting off a single particle for the passions of the time, not stroking or scratching; where is it still to be found? This joy of sinking oneself in the subject without ever stretching out one's head and making a friendly face to the public, it purifies the reader and banishes the unclean at the outset. 'Leave all uncleanness behind, ye who enter here!' You have again unravelled for me new secrets of the human breast in this your work of art. The light of genius has flashed for me in the dark depths of a lost age. The fixed Norse myth has melted for me, its figures have become newly comprehensible to me. Of the dramatic, I do not speak to you (that I would do if I had written a drama myself); I only speak of that of which I have proved my understanding."²

These are some of the principal expressions of criticism which Hebbel received from that literary circle which stood nearest to him, but the press also received his work as no work of his had ever been received before, and amidst much unintelligent and overharsh criticism arose the appreciative analyses and just estimates of such men as Strodtmann and Kühne,³ so that Hebbel could be well contented with the critical treatment of his work and could write to Uechtritz, on the 25th of October, 1862: "More than thirty criticisms are already before me, among them some very long and detailed articles, and all, however different in other respects, unite in taking the matter seriously; praise which was formerly a matter of course, but for which nowadays a critic but seldom strives. In general, the appreciative recognition greatly preponderates."⁴

The drama which had cost Hebbel many hours of discouragement and apprehension, as well as hours of confidence and joy, the drama which he had declared would be either his greatest

¹ Bw. I. 457.

² *Ibid.* II. 461.

³ Cf. Bw. II. 289 f. 547; Nachl. II. 245.

⁴ Bw. II. 289 f.

deed, or his greatest folly, which he felt had brought him to the turning point where would be decided whether Heine's words condemning him to isolation would hold good for all time,¹ this drama brought to the closing days of Hebbel's life the praise and acclaim which had hitherto been granted him so sparingly. The last of the yearly records in his journal, December 31, 1862, shows the happiness in his family circle, the joy in recognition, which were to brighten and cheer the months of suffering that followed: "God be thanked, I can say of this year that it has been passed in health except for slight disturbances, health for wife and child, health for me. . . . The Nibelungen has greater success than ever a work of mine before, in the press, as well as in the theatre. Quite contrary to my expectations, so much so, that not even in the farthest corner of my heart was hidden a silent hope which divined it. To cease, to hang the bagpipe on the nail, would now perhaps be best."²

¹ Nachl. II. 208. "Heine said in the fall of 1843 . . . 'I ought really to be vexed with you; I predicted the end of the artistic period, and you begin a new one. But you are punished enough; Lessing was lonely, you will be much more lonely.'"

² Tgb. IV. 6052.

CHAPTER II

HEBBEL'S CONCEPTION OF HIS DRAMATIC PROBLEM

HEBBEL set down in his foreword, "To the Gentle Reader," his own attitude toward the *Nibelungenlied* as a source. "To follow him [the creator of the *Nibelungenlied*] at every step and turn, with proper reverence for his intentions, so far as the difference between the epic and dramatic form at all permitted, seemed to be at once the author's duty and glory, and only in the case of the obvious gaps to which the historian of our national literature [Gervinus] had already pointed with fine sense, and strong emphasis, did he of necessity go back to the older sources, and to the historical supplements. . . . Accordingly, all the situations [*Momente*] of the tragedy are given by the epic itself, even though often, (as could not fail to be the case, considering the changeful history of the old poem), in confused and scattered form or in utmost brevity. . . . The gentle reader is requested also to seek nothing in the tragedy behind the 'Nibelungen Noth' except just 'the Nibelungen Noth' itself and to excuse this request most kindly by the circumstances."¹ Again, in a letter to Campe, Hebbel wrote, "I keep absolutely to the *Nibelungenlied*, and supplement it only where it has gaps."² His purpose was to "fuse the dramatic treasure of the *Nibelungenlied* for the actual stage, not, however, to unravel the poetically mystical content of the old Norse saga-cycle to which it belongs, or even to illustrate some new problem of life"; his task was simply to mould the events of the epic into a dramatic chain and to inspire them with new poetic life wherever necessary.¹

¹ W. IV, 341 ff., and cf. Bw. II, 68: Ich wollte dem Publikum bloss das grosse National-Epos ohne eigene Zuthat dramatisch näher rücken.

² Nachl. II. 117.

Thus Hebbel has himself clearly stated his indebtedness to his principal source, and his intentions in so far as his own composition was concerned. He spoke of his work during its composition as a bold undertaking at which he shuddered in sober hours, and of composing as "an intermediate thing between dreaming and somnambulism, which one must take as it comes."¹ Again, he wrote of his "dramatic piece of daring" which he sometimes compared to Siegfried's journey to Isenland.² The Nibelungenlied seemed to him, the more he worked with it, like a deaf and dumb poem which speaks only by means of signs,³ and this feeling he voiced in his apostrophe to the old epic:—

Taubstumm scheinst Du mir zwar, Du redest öfter durch Zeichen
Oder Geberden, als durch unser geschmeidiges Wort,
Ja, Du bedienst Dich auch dann noch des schlichtesten, das Du nur findest,
Aber ich nenne Dich doch unser unsterblichstes Lied.⁴

Of his own share in the production of the drama, he usually spoke with extreme modesty. He was the "interpreter of one higher" and wished to be no more than that. "But this higher one," he wrote to the Hesperus Society in Vienna, "the poet of our immortal Nibelungen epic, for which all peoples of the earth envy us, has a right to be heard, and perhaps I have succeeded in concentrating and intensifying it in the narrower and more compact form of the drama, as in a speaking-trumpet. . . . It is not a question of myself, but of the great song of the German nation, of the most powerful of all songs of German strength and German fidelity. . . . At all events, it certainly depends more on the bird than on the tree which offers it a perch, and this thrush has been singing now for seven hundred years."⁵

Again, he repeatedly compared the Nibelungenlied to an excellent old clock and himself to the clock-maker who had cleaned it from cobwebs and dust and regulated it. "Now it marks the time and strikes well again, but he is not on that

¹ Bw. I. 339.

² *Ibid.* II. 474.

³ Tgb. IV. 5405.

⁴ W. VI. 450 f. published in Gutzkow's *Unterhaltungen am häuslichen Herd*, Leipzig, 1858, and in Strodtmann's *Orion*, Hamburg, 1863.

⁵ Nachl. II. 148.

account an artist, but only an artisan.”¹ Friedrich von Uechtritz protested that the translation of an epic into a drama, even with the most faithful retention of all the motives and characters, is as independent a work of creative production as any other, and demands a spirit absolutely equal to the poetic height of the epic; and he declared that the difficulty of the work of creation is increased rather than diminished by the fidelity of transmission and transformation.² Hebbel agreed with his friend that a real epic requires a poet as great as its creator to transpose it into a drama, but he considered the *Nibelungenlied* not an epic but a drama in epic form, and its author a dramatist in his conception, from crown to toe. Yet he admitted that it required “a dramatic eye to bring to its foundation-walls the great structure in which the children seem sometimes to have played puss-in-the-corner.”³

“Goethe,” he wrote in a letter to Baron von Schorn, in Weimar, “had no reason to say of his *Götz* that he had only succeeded in plucking the flowers of a great life,⁴ but I have really only brought together with a perhaps not unskilful hand, and made comprehensible the great tragedy which was completely existent but confusedly scattered. Of that I was always convinced and am only the more so since the production.”⁵ Yet he rejoiced in the poetic achievement which he felt that his “*Nibelungen*” really represented: “In it I come nearer to Shakespere by five thousand degrees, in each of the five acts by one thousand.”⁶

As the work of composition progressed, he felt more and more strongly the mistake made by his predecessors in choosing portions of the poem, in deepening one psychological problem, rather than representing the whole world-problem. It became his fixed principle to leave out nothing that was really essential to the narrative, or to the problems involved. “Here it is all or nothing.”⁷ “Absolutely nothing can be omitted,” he wrote

¹ Bw. II. 280 f., 391.

² *Ibid.* 283.

³ *Ibid.* 285; W. IV. 341.

⁴ Cf. “*Dichtung und Wahrheit*,” III., 13. Buch, vol. 22. p. 120, Hempel edition: “Man hatte, weil ich die Blumen eines grossen Daseins abzupflücken verstand, mich für einen sorgfältigen Kunstgärtner gehalten.”

⁵ Nachl. II. 153.

⁶ Frankl, 46.

⁷ Bw. II. 68; Tgb. IV. 5791.

to Friedrich von Uechtritz; "in this the poem differs from the Homeric epics; I must therefore allow myself Shakesperian liberties with respect to place and time, which I have elsewhere always regarded and avoided as the prerogatives of royalty."¹

The second mistake of his predecessors which he tried to avoid was the lack of simplicity in the tone of their dramas. He wished to find the mean between the bas-relief and free nature, which seemed to him absolutely necessary with the mythical figures of the saga.² With such material, he felt that the author must "renounce nine-tenths of culture, and yet invest the remainder with interest." "That is the whole art," he exclaimed, "but the gentleman would not subordinate their Ego, and did not want to be born in the nineteenth century for naught."³

Another characteristic of the old poem which he tried to retain was the absolute humanness that he felt existed in characters and motivation. Again, in his foreword, he emphasizes the masterly manner in which the epic poet has guarded himself from straying into the misty region where his figures would have been transformed into allegories, and where magic agencies would have taken the place of generally accepted motives:—

"It cannot be sufficiently admired with what artistic wisdom the great poet has succeeded in cutting off the mystical background of his poem from the human world, which yet upon a casual observation seems quite enmeshed in it, and how he has been able to preserve for the human action its full freedom, despite the gay swarm of enticing giants and dwarfs, norns and valkyries. He needs, — to emphasize simply the two principal points, — on the one hand, for the epitasis, no double marriage for his hero, and no secret draught by which it is brought about; sufficient for him as mainspring is Brunhild's unrequited love, which is just as quickly suppressed as it is kindled, and is only betrayed to the most penetrating judge of the heart by her precipitate greeting; a love which flames up again in black flames as envy of her happy rival, and rather gives its object over to death at the risk of everything than relinquish him to her. But neither does the poet on the other hand overstep the line

¹ Bw. II. 235.

² *Ibid.* 532 f.

³ *Ibid.* 68.

where the human ceases and the tragic interest wanes at the dénouement, although he was often censured for this, and not without apparent reason; indeed, he does not venture nearly so far as Æschylus in his *Clytemnestra*, who, incited by new desires, defends far more, or at least quite as much, the possession of the second husband she has won, as she appeases the shades of her slain daughter. For however Kriemhild's deed may horrify us, the poet leads up to it slowly, step by step, not disregarding a single one, and at each one laying bare her heart with its endless, continually growing grief, until she reaches the dizzy summit, where she must add the last most monstrous sacrifice to the many which she has made with bitter pain and which she can no longer recall, or else must renounce the whole reward of her life, to the scorn of her demonic enemies; and the poet reconciles us absolutely with her, in that her own inner suffering, even during the terrible act of revenge, is still much greater than the physical suffering which she causes others."

Thus Hebbel conceived the altogether human atmosphere of the old epic, and this he tried to instil into his own work. To Franz von Dingelstedt, he wrote of the first two parts of the trilogy, "Everything in my *Nibelungen* is quite human,"¹ and after he had begun work on the third part, he reiterated his feeling of wonder that, in spite of the enormity of the material, everything arises from the most human motives, if the great scale of the whole is only not left out of account.²

Hebbel's exposition to Hettner of the chief elements in the tragic conflict again gives a clear statement of the lines which he tried to follow in his drama. On the last day of the year 1859, he wrote: "That which gives me, even in hours of disenchantment in my precarious undertaking, some confidence in its success, is the circumstance that, despite the gigantic measure of the characters, the motives from which they act are so infinitely simple and follow so naturally in the course of the story, the one from the other. Siegfried overleaps the bounds of nature and scarcely knows what he does when he anoints himself with the blood of the dragon and makes himself invulnerable; what can be simpler, since the opportunity which is

¹ Bw. II. 51.

² Tgb. IV. 5754.

suddenly offered to him must be seized just as suddenly, if it is not to slip by forever? But, indeed, it is also no less simple that Hagen, the never-vanquished and never cast down, who otherwise would certainly not have shrunk from an honorable combat with him, believes himself justified in a dishonorable course by his inaccessibility. Indeed, in reality, he does the same thing that Siegfried has done, even though in another sphere, and in another way. Here I see, namely, the true kernel of the tragic conflict, and I trust rightly, since, on the one hand, the whole poem is wonderfully illumined from this point to the furthest radii, and on the other hand a girdle stolen in a spirit of mischief which first of all brings about a reckless confession and then a rude woman's quarrel, is certainly much too closely related to the famous leather strap of a modern tragedy¹ with which you so humorously thrash the back of the author, to be connected with the downfall of a world. I am much inclined to set as motto to my play the verses from Ajax:—

Denn übermäss'ge Leiber und unmenschliche
Sind stets verhasst den Göttern (Solger)

and thereby to recall the primitive point of view of the Greeks and its identity with the Germanic view set forth in our epic. Just so it is with Kriemhild. From her absolute, planless, even dreamless passivity, which goes so far that not even her child, Siegfried's son, is anything to her, she is aroused by Etzel's wooing, she grasps his hand because the mightiest sword in the world gleams in it, and then seeks to bring Hagen within her power, because she does not doubt that her brother, who, through fear of his fury, did not prevent him from murdering Siegfried, can also not prevent her from wreaking vengeance on him through fear of Etzel. The brother-in-law, the guest, was not safe with King Gunther, how should the vassal be, and that to the degree that he would risk for him life and limb, even his whole house? She is wrong and must needs be wrong, for Hagen is no demigod as Siegfried was; but the noblest sacrifices have already fallen during the attempt, how could she stop before she had reached a goal from which she

¹ Otto Ludwig's "Erbförster."

herself would have drawn back in horror if she had seen it clearly before her at the very beginning? But I shall cease, for I have already given you proof to the point of exhaustion that not merely the mouth, but the pen, too, overflows with the 'abundance of the heart.' Forgive me!"¹

After the completion of the trilogy, Hebbel declared that he was prepared to hear of "problems" which he had never thought of, and to learn, besides, something about "romantic sympathies," but he hoped that the unprejudiced person would find that he had taken, now as always, the law of the production from the subject itself, and that he had sought to construct a tragedy which, despite the necessarily inseparable mystical background, was yet purely human in all its motives. "For it is really, even though only a few seem to comprehend it, something very different whether a work of art is dipped in a mythical coloring, like Shakespeare's *Tempest*, for example, or whether it is given fantastic wheels and springs as Kleist partially does in his *Käthchen von Heilbronn*."²

In his journal he recorded his conviction that on the basis of the necessary mythical element, a purely human tragedy could be constructed, and that he had constructed it, in as far as his powers allowed. "The mysticism of the background," he wrote, "is to remind at most that in the poem not the clock which marks the seconds and which measures off the existence of gnats and ants is striking, but only the clock which marks the hours. But let him who is disturbed by the mythical basis ponder that he has to do with such even in man himself, if closely observed, and even in the pure human being, in the representative of the species, and not merely in the still further particularized offshoot of it, in the individual. Or can his principal characteristics, whether the physical or the spiritual, be explained; that is, from any other organic canon than that which was given him once for all, and which is not to be carried back to a last original reason of things, or critically explained? Are they not partly, as, for example, most of the passions, in opposition to reason and conscience; that is, to those capabilities of man which, as absolutely general and uninteresting ones, may

¹ *Vossische Zeitung*, Jan. 8, 1905.

² Bw. II. 509.

most surely be termed those that join him immediately with the universe, and has this opposition ever been checked? Why then deny in art an act, upon which even the observation of nature rests?"¹ Hebbel felt, then, that in his tragedy he was, to a certain extent, giving form and expression to the unseen, unknown elements which govern human lives.

¹ Tgb. IV. 5933.

CHAPTER III

THE SOURCES AND HEBBEL'S USE OF THEM

I. THE NIBELUNGENLIED

THERE is no reason for supposing that Hebbel ever attempted to read any of the older forms of the Nibelungen saga in the original tongues. Narrowed in his early development by the most oppressive conditions of uninspiring environment and grinding poverty, his thirst for knowledge and his eagerness for attainment received little external help and impetus until, already grown to manhood, he was enabled, through the assistance of Amalie Schoppe, to prepare for university work. How difficult it was for him, at this age, to begin with the schoolboy rudiments of Latin is testified by many passages in his journal and letters. With French, as well, it was a difficult matter, although he gained a fair mastery of the language during his stay in Paris. The study of Italian was then naturally easier, and before the end of his sojourn in Rome and Naples he ventured to become a party to any conversation.¹ But although he speaks in his journal of the great beauty and plasticity of the Greek,² and refers to the character of the English language, we have no evidence that he ever tried to master any tongues but Latin and the two Romance languages.

Hebbel's approach to the Nibelungen saga was, therefore, through the medium of translation. It was a fortunate chance which led him, one day in 1835, shortly after his arrival in

¹ Cf. Tgb. II. 2445, 2751; Bw. I. 230; Kuh, I. 190; for other references to learning languages, Tgb. I. 2, 1412, 1701. 45 f.; II. 3010. 36 f., 3165, 3172, 3252; III. 3352, 3822, 4401.

² Tgb. I. 376.

Hamburg, to open the book which lay before him on Amalie Schoppe's table to that most wonderful and dramatic adventure of the Nibelungenlied which sings of Siegfried's death among the flowers.¹

For years the heroic figures of the old epic wavered in his fancy, half impelling him to call to life their slumbering forms, half repulsing him by the magnitude of their proportions, at times doubtless lulled to forgetfulness in the stress of more immediate endeavors and necessities.

When he began to study the Nibelungenlied seriously, with a view to dramatic production, he read and reread the newly published translation of Ludwig Braunfels. Nowhere in journal or correspondence, does he mention this work, but Professor Werner possesses the copy which Hebbel used, marked with his pencil notes,² and in many instances direct borrowing of phraseology from this translation is traceable. It is probable, too, that Hebbel knew Simrock's translation, for he was well acquainted with Simrock's publications,³ and there is occasionally in the "Nibelungen" a linguistic similarity closer than that with the translation of Braunfels; but there is no reason for believing that he knew the earlier translations of the philologists, von der Hagen and Büsching, which make no attempt at an artistic rendering of the Lied. That of von der Hagen follows the original too slavishly for a ready understanding, and that of Büsching is scarcely more than a prose translation with the retention of end rimes. The only translation which is mentioned in Hebbel's writings is one that appeared in the same year in which he completed his trilogy, and therefore could not have had an influence upon his composition. In a letter to Julius Campe, December 19, 1862, he told of having received from Berlin, a few days before the performance of the "Nibelungen" there, a telegraphic despatch requesting detailed information as to the costume that the Nibelungen should wear. "I had almost answered, 'Ask the tailor,' since I have only to concern myself with the inner workings of individuals, and not with externalities, but I contented myself with a *vide* Johannes

¹ Tgb. IV. 5555; Nachl. I. 11; Kuh, I. 185; and Nn. 1 ff.

² W. IV. 346.

³ Tgb. III. 3893; IV. 6065.

Scherr, *Nibelungen in Prose*, Leipzig, published by Wigand, to which we conformed in Weimar.”¹

The writer has made a careful collation of all passages in the “*Nibelungen*” which could be regarded as either direct or indirect borrowings from the epic. An exhaustive citation of all such lines from the trilogy with the corresponding verses from the *Nibelungenlied* would, however, lead far beyond the scope of the present work, and would prove little more than can be deduced from a limited number of quotations which will show Hebbel’s method of procedure in drawing from his principal source. A collection of all such passages shows that 1213 of the 5456 lines in Hebbel’s trilogy, besides five lines from other manuscripts than the one printed, and forty-five notes and stage directions, may be regarded as embodying a suggestion of idea or word from the *Nibelungenlied*. It would, however, be an exaggeration to say that all these 1213 lines are direct borrowings from the epic, yet it would equally be an underestimation of Hebbel’s use of the poem to limit the suggestions which he adopted from it to these lines, for frequently an idea or an incident is expanded far beyond the scope of the actual passage drawn from the epic.

The question of chief interest here is concerning the method and nature of Hebbel’s borrowings from the *Nibelungenlied*. Did he read and reread his copy of Braunfels’ translation with the purpose of later reference in the form of direct verbal borrowing, or did he fill himself with a knowledge of the poem, to work it over in a new mould without immediate concern for the source during composition? The answer to both of these questions can be correctly given as yes and no, for Hebbel was unconcerned with literalness of transmission, and yet, in certain specific cases, his marking of passages in Braunfels and his use of the phraseology in them and in other passages show that he directly referred to the translation in the course of his writing.

Professor Werner, in his notes to the critical edition, gives fifteen passages which Hebbel had thus marked. The marked passages are lines or stanzas which Hebbel made use of in content or word, or they are a collection of stanzas, the incidents and

¹ Nachl. II. 282.

speeches of which he employed in whole scenes. With but four exceptions they are brought into requisition in the third part of the trilogy, and these four exceptions are all passages used in the scene where Siegfried is slain. This seems natural, for Hebbel was familiar with the first part of the *Nibelungenlied*, which Braunfels calls "Siegfrieds Tod," long before his creative work began, while he evidently knew less intimately the second division which, in the Braunfels translation, is called "Kriemhildens Rache," and which he had not finished reading by the 26th of January, 1852.¹ Besides, the dramatization of the second part was a matter of greater difficulty than that of the first part, and required more careful choosing of details, and omission of gruesome and lengthy incidents.²

For use in "Kriemhilds Rache," Hebbel marked one passage each concerning Eckewart's fidelity³ and Dietrich's greeting and warning,⁴ a long and a short passage dealing with Kriemhild's reception of the *Nibelungen*,⁵ a longer passage at the beginning of Canto XXXIII., dealing with Dankwart's entrance in bloody armor into Etzel's banquet hall,⁶ a stanza which tells how the Burgundians sat on the dead and drank blood,⁷ a passage for the scene between Kriemhild and Rüdiger,⁸ one for the last pathetic scene between Giseler and Kriemhild,⁹ one for Rüdiger's appeal to Etzel to care for his wife, child, and people,¹⁰ and two for scene xii., of "Kriemhilds Rache," where Giseler rejoices at Rüdiger's approach, thinking that it signifies peace, and Hagen replies:—

¹ Bw. II. 23.

² In citing Hebbel's principal source, the *Nibelungenlied*, references are given by canto, page, strophe, and line to the translation of Braunfels. In the few instances where Simrock's text is obviously nearer, his translation has also been quoted. The pages of Braunfels' translation are wrongly numbered after page 336, the numbers being 325 to 380 instead of 337 to 392. In the citations, the correct numbers are given. The numbers in parentheses refer to the corresponding strophes in the Lachmann text which both Braunfels and Simrock used as a basis for their translations; where Braunfels has drawn from other texts, this is indicated in the parentheses.

³ 1330 (1223), Nn. 3308 ff.

⁴ 1779 (1662), Nn. 3758.

⁵ 1792-1795 (1675-1678), Nn. 4011-4032. 1803 (1685), Nn. 4065 ff.

⁶ 2020 ff. (1888 ff.), Nn. 4950 ff.

⁷ 2156 (2019), Nn. 4983, 5269 f.

⁹ 2176 ff. (2038 ff.), K. R. V. x.

⁸ 2214 ff. (2075 ff.), K. R. V. ix.

¹⁰ 2241 (2101), Nn. 5353 ff.

“Es gilt den letzten und den schwersten Kampf,
Jetzt soll sich würgen, was sich liebt.”¹

But these are evidently not the only passages to which Hebbel referred during his work on the “Nibelungen,” although his accurate memory quite probably served him in some cases where there are actual verbal similarities between his drama and the translation which he used. Some of the more striking instances of this word likeness are given below:—

244-246. Gunther.

Du bist willkommen, Held aus Niederland,
Und was Dir hier gefällt, Du magst Dir's nehmen,
Nur trink mit uns, eh' Du's von dannen trägst.

III. 24. 130. 1. (125) Gernot.

“Ihr sollt uns sein willkommen,” sprach Frau Utens Kind.
131. 1-3. (126)
Da sprach der Wirth des Landes: “Alles was wir haben,
Begehrt Ihr es nach Ehren, das sei Euch unterthan,
Und sei mit Euch getheilet Alles, Leib und Gut.”

268-270. Kriemhild.

Ich hörte stets, dass Liebe kurze Lust
Und langes Leid zu bringen pflegt, ich seh's
Ja auch an Dir und werde nimmer lieben.

I. 5. 15. 2-4. (15)

“Ohne Ritters Minne, so will ich immer sein;
So schöne will ich bleiben bis an meinen Tod,
Dass ich von einem Manne nimmer mag gewinnen Noth.”

17. 2-4. (17)

“Es lehrt' an manchen Weiben schon oft der Augenschein,
Wie Liebe noch mit Leide am Ende lohnen kann.
Ich will sie meiden beide, so wird mir nimmer missgethan.”

544 f. Siegfried.

Ganze Haufen

Von Edelsteinen lagen aufgethürmt.

548 f. Siegfried.

aus der Höhle blitzte

Das rothe Gold hervor.

III. 19. 95. 1-3. (93)

Er sah so viel Gesteines, wie wir hören sagen,
Hundert Lastwagen hätten's nicht getragen;
Noch mehr des rothen Goldes von Nibelungenland.

XIX. 186. 1159. 1. (1063)

Es war auch da nichts Andres, als Gold und Edelstein.

¹ 2248 ff. (2108 ff.), K. R. V. xii; 2277 (2137), Nn. 5359.

953. Rumolt.
Der nimmt's wohl auch mit Teufelsweibern auf.
1087. Siegfried.
Ein Teufelsweib.
- VII. 74. 451. 4. (417) Hagen.
"Die Ihr begehrt zu minnen, traun, die ist des Teufels Weib."
- 1466 f. Siegfried.
Sie suchte mir die Hände
Zu binden.
- 1484 f. Siegfried.
Ich wurde
Damit gebunden.
- X. 105. 654. 2. (587)
Da griff nach einem Gürtel die herrliche Maid.
655. 1. (588)
Die Füß' und auch die Hände sie ihm zusammenband.
110. 690. 2. (619)
Und wollt' ihn hin gebunden, so wie den König, legen.
112. 700. 1-2. (625)
Da griff sie an die Seite, wo sie die Borte fand,
Und wollt' ihn damit binden; da wehrt' es seine Hand.
- 1467 f. Siegfried.
Da ward ich wüthend
Und brauchte meine Kraft.
- X. 111. 693. 2-3. (622)
Da schämte sich Siegfried; zu zürnen er begann.
Mit ungeheuren Kräften setzt' er sich ihr entgegen.
- 1668-1670. Brunhild.
Das fand ich auch
Natürlich als ich ihn—er nannte sich
Ja selber so—für einen Dienstmann hielt.
- XIV. 137. 847. 3. (764)
"Drum dünkt er mich ein Dienstmann; ich hört' es ihn gestehn."
1734. Gunther.
Hast Du Dich je gerühmt?
- XIV. 140. 871. 4. (788) Brunhild.
"Hat er sich's gerühmet, es geht ihm wahrlich an den Leib."
142. 881. 2. (798) Gunther.
"Hat er sich's gerühmet, hören lass' er's hier."
883. 3-4. (800)
"Du habest dich gerühmet, du wärest ihr erster Mann;
So sagt dein Weib Kriemhilde. Hast du, Degen, das gethan?"
2445. Siegfried.
Doch wisst, Ihr habt in ihm Euch selbst erschlagen.
- XVI. 163. (1028. 4. (C 1008)
"Glaubt in rechten Treuen, dass Ihr Euch selber habt erschlagen."

- 2572 f. Ute.
 Es waren Schächer.
 Kriemhild.
 Ich kenne sie.
- XVII. 173. 1077. 4-1078. 1. (986 f.) Gunther.
 "Ihn erschlugen Schächer; fürwahr, Hagen that es nicht."
 "Mir sind diese Schächer," sprach sie, "gar wohl bekannt."
3311. f. Werbel.
 Nun gieb uns endlich Urlaub, hoher König,
 Sie brauchen uns zu Hause.
- XXIV. 246. 1529. 1. 3. (1419)
 Die Boten Kriemhildens der Aufenthalt verdross;
 Sie begehrten täglich, mit Urlaub heimzugehn.
- 3389 f. Hagen.
 Sie schwebten über einem alten Brunnen
 Und glichen Vögeln, die im Nebel hüpfen.
- XXV. 255. 1586. 1. (1476)
 "Sie schwebten wie die Vögel vor ihm auf der Fluth.
3392. Hagen.
 Ich schlich heran, da floh'n sie scheu von dannen.
- XXV. 255. 1584. 1-2. (1474)
 Hagen ward ihrer inne; er schlich ihnen heimlich nah.
 Da sie sich dess versannen, wie enteilt sie da!
- 3410 f. Hagen.
 Ich warf die Kleider
 Mit Freuden wieder hin und stürzte fort.
- XXV. 256. 1588. 1-2. (1478)
 Der Rede war da Hagen im Herzen froh und hehr;
 Er gab ihnen ihre Kleider, und säumte sich nicht mehr.
3739. Gudrun.
 Ich schämte mich ja nur.
- XXVII. 279. 1738. 4. (1622)
 Sie schämte sich der Frage; so hat ja manche Maid gethan.
3763. Dietrich.
 Seid auf der Hut, Ihr stolzen Nibelungen.
- XXVIII. 286. 1781. 4. (1664)
 "Du Trost der Nibelungen, davor behüte du dich!"
4345. Volker.
 Komm, steh'n wir auf.
- XXIX. 295. 1836. 1. (1718)
 "Nun stehn wir auf vom Sitze," sprach der Fiedelmann.
- 4518 f. Hagen.
 Nun werft Euch in die Kleider, aber nehmt
 Die Waffen, statt der Rosen, in die Hand.
- XXXI. 307. 1912. 4. (1790)
 Er sprach: "Ihr Helden sollten hier tragen anderes Kleid."

308. 1913. 2. (1791)
 "Nun traget, statt der Rosen, die Waffen in der Hand."
5061. Hildebrand.
 Unhold!
5445. Hagen.
 Unhold!
- XXVIII. 289. 1804. 4. (1686) Dietrich.
 "Nur zu, du falscher Unhold."
- 5105-5107. Etzel.
 Herr Rüdeger,
 Ihr helft dem Feind? Wir haben der Erschlag'nen
 Auch ohne Euch genug.
- XXXVII. 356. 2221. 1-3. (2082)
 Da sprach zum Markgrafen Etzel, der König hehr:
 "Wie habt Ihr uns geholfen, viedler Rüdeger!
 Da wir so viel der Todten in diesem Lande ha'n."
- 5261-5264. Rüdeger.
 So schwer wie ich, ward noch kein Mensch geprüft,
 Denn was ich thun und was ich lassen mag,
 So thu' ich böß und werde d'rob gescholten,
 Und lass' ich Alles, schilt mich Jedermann.
- XXXVII. 358. 2230. 1-3. (2091)
 "Und welches ich nun lasse, und welches ich begeh',
 So thu' ich immer bößlich und mir zu Leid und Weh;
 Lass' ich aber Beides, so schilt mich Jedermann."
5394. Hildebrand.
 Man schlägt die Nibelungen ohne mich!
- XXXI. 315. 1963. 1-2. (1837)
 Da gab die Antwort Hildebrand, ein Held gar ritterlich:
 "Wer schlägt die Nibelungen, der thut es ohne mich."
5395. Hildebrand.
 Dankwart, Du lehnst Dich müßig in die Ecke.
- XXXVII. 368. 2305. 1-2. (2164)
 Den sitzen, den sich lehnen, sah man da manchen Degen.
 Sie waren wieder müßig.
- 5445-5447. Hagen.
 ich hab' Dich wieder überlistet,
 Nun ist der Ort nur Gott und mir bekannt,
 Und Einer von uns Beiden sagt's Dir nicht.
- XXXIX. 391. 2451. 3-4. (2308)
 "Den Schatz, den weiss nun Keiner, als ich und Gott allein:
 Er soll dir bösem Unhold immer ganz verhohlen sein."

In a very few instances there is a greater verbal similarity with Simrock's translation, which seems to show that the poet

either compared the two versions, or that some of Simrock's phraseology remained in his memory from an earlier reading.

510 f. Siegfried.

Ich bin bereit mit Dir hinab zu zieh'n,
Wenn Du die Schwester mir als Lohn versprichst.

VI. 58. 343. 2-4. (332)¹

"Gibst du mir deine Schwester, so thu' ich es gern,
Die schöne Kriemhilde, die Königstochter hehr;
So gehr' ich keines Lohnes nach meinen Arbeiten mehr."

Simrock.

"Ich will es thun, versprichst du die Schwester mir zum Lohn."²

1690. Kriemhild.

Das Keksweib meines Gatten mich verachten!

XIV. 140. 865. 4. (782)

"Wie mocht' eines Mannes Buhle je werden eines Königs Weib?"

Simrock.

"Wie mocht eines Mannes Kebse je werden Königsweib."³

1727. Brunhild.

Bin ich ein Keksweib, König?

XIV. 141. 872. 3. (789)

"Ihr hiesst mich eine Buhle; das lasst mich besser sehn."

142. 879. 3. (796)

"Sie sagt, gebuhlet habe mich Siegfried, ihr Mann."

Simrock.

"Ihr wollet mich verkebsen."

"Sie sagt ich sei die Kebse von Siegfried ihrem Mann."

2200. Hagen.

D'rum rath' ich heut' zur Jagd.

XV. 151. 938. 2-4. (854) Gunther.

"So will ich hinreiten, und Schwein' und Bären jagen
In dem Wasgauwalde, wie ich oft gethan."

Das hatte gerathen Hagen, der gar ungetreue Mann.

Simrock.

"So rath' ich, dass wir Bären und Schweine jagen gehn
Nach dem Wasgauwalde wie ich oft gethan."

Das hatte Hagen gerathen, der ungetreue Mann.

The tenth edition has "Nach dem Odenwalde," the name which Hebbel uses in his scene direction, "Siegfreids Tod," V. i., and in Hagen's mocking words: —

¹ The first quotation from the Nibelungenlied is in each instance from Braunfels' translation.

² The first edition, 1827, is quoted, and, unless otherwise stated, the 2d, 3d and 10th editions (1829, 1843, 1850) have like phrasing.

³ Tenth and later editions omit *Wie*.

Im Odenwald, da springt ein munt'rer Quell.

Cf. 4530. Hagen.

“Seit wir zurück sind aus dem Odenwald.”

3421-3423.

Ihr Alle seht, wenn Ihr in's Heunenland

Hinunter zieht, den grünen Rhein nicht wieder.

XXV. 256. 1592. 2. (1482)

Von Euch wird Keiner lebend verbleiben.

Simrock.

Keiner von Euch Degen wird die Heimath wieder sehn.

Oftentimes, where there is not actual verbal likeness, there is a parallelism of expression which indicates that the form of the thought in the epic was in the poet's mind. The following passages show this type of borrowing:—

184-186. Siegfried.

Ich hab' ein Reich,

So gross, wie Dein's, und wenn Du mich besiegst,

So bist Du Herr darin. Was willst Du mehr?

215-216.

Ich brenne, mich zu messen mit dem Recken,

Der mir mein Gut verdoppelt oder nimmt.

III. 22. 117. 2-118. 3. (112 f.)

“Wenn nicht dein Land den Frieden durch deine Kraft gewinnt,
Will ich dessen walten; und auch das Erbe mein,
Erwirbst du es mit Stärke, das soll dir unterthänig sein.

“Dein Erb' und meines sollen in gleicher Wage liegen,
Vermag es unser Einer, dem Andern obzusiegen,
Dem soll es alles dienen, die Leut' und auch das Land.”

187-189. Siegfried.

Ich hörte

Ja doch, dass hier die Tapfersten der Recken

Versammelt seien.

218-220.

Wenn ich auch nur auf Deine Diener blicke:

So stolze Männer würden Dir nicht folgen,

Empfändest Du nicht ganz so, wie ich selbst.

III. 21. 111. 1-112. 2. (106 f.)

“Mir ward gesaget Märe in meines Vaters Land,
Dass hier bei Euch wären, (das hätt' ich gern erkannt),
Wohl die kühnsten Recken (dess hab' ich viel vernommen),
Die je gewann ein König; darum bin ich hieher gekommen.

“Auch hör' ich Rittersugend Euch selber zugestehn,

Dass man noch keinen König kühner hab' gesehn."

22. 114. 1. (109)

"Nun da Ihr seid so kühne, wie's heisset weit und breit."

522-524. Hagen.

Er soll den Anlauf nehmen, Du willst werfen
Und springen?

Siegfried.

Ja! so mein ich's! Und dabei
Ihn selbst noch tragen!

VII. 78. 479. 3-4. (437)

Durch seine schönen Künste hatt' er Kraft genug
Dass er in dem Sprunge noch den König Gunther trug.

560 f. Siegfried.

in toller Wuth

Mit rasch gezog'nen Degen auf mich ein.

III. 19. (97. 2. (C 94)

Der zweien Kön'ge Mannen gingen mit Streit ihn an.

638-640. Siegfried.

Nun wird's lebendig in der Burg, Gestalten
Erscheinen auf der Zinne, Schleier flattern
Und eine stolze Jungfrau späht herab.

1711. Brunhild.

Ich war auf der Zinne.

VII. 67. 402. 3. (377)

Oben in den Fenstern manche schöne Maid.

405. 1-2. (380)

"Ich sehe ihrer Eine in schneeweissem Kleid.

In einem Fenster stehen, so herrlich ist die Maid."

VIII. 85. 525. 1. (477)

Da stund in den Zinnen manch liebliches Kind.

653. Volker.

Nein, König, bleib daheim.

VI. 64. 384. 1. (361)

Sie sprach: "Vielliebei Bruder, bleibt hier.

663. Gunther.

Wohlan! Für Brunhild gebe ich Dir Kriemhild.

VI. 58. 344. 2-3. (333)

"Und kommt uns die schöne Brünhild in dieses Land,
So will ich dir zum Weibe meine Schwester geben."

799 f. Siegfried.

Auch thust Du mir zu viel der Ehre an,
Mich vor dem König Gunther zu begrüßen.

VII. 71. 433. 1-3. (399)

"Gar grossen Dank," so sprach er, "edle Frau Brunhild,
Dass Ihr mich Grusses würdigt, Fürstentochter mild,
Vor diesem edlen Recken, der vor mir geht einher."

72. 435. 1. (401)
 "Er ist geheissen Gunther, ein König reich und hehr."
801. Siegfried.
 Ich bin hier nur sein Führer.
- VII. 71. 433. 4. (399)
 "Denn der ist mein Herre. Gern entbehrt' ich solcher Ehr'."
- VI. 66. 399. 3. (375) Siegfried advises them to say: —
 "Gunther sei mein Herre, und ich sein Lehensmann."
1188. Kriemhild.
 Mein Herr und Bruder, füg' es, wie Du magst.
- X. 102. 631. 2-4. (567)
 "Ihr sollt mich nimmer flehen. So will ich immer sein,
 Wie Ihr mir gebietet; das werde stets gethan.
 Ich will mich gern verloben; wen Ihr mir, Herre, gebt zum Mann."
- 1219-1222. Brunhild.
 Wie darfst Du's es wagen,
 Die Hand nach ihr, nach einer Königstochter,
 Nur auszustrecken, da Du doch Vasall
 Und Dienstmann bist!
- 1499 f. Ich kann's nicht seh'n,
 Dass Deine edle Schwester sich erniedrigt.
- X. 103. 638. 2-4. (574)
 "Es ist um deine Schwester mir von Herzen leid.
 Die seh' ich sitzen nahe dem Dienstmanne dein.
 Das muss ich stets beweinen, soll sie so verderbet sein."
1227. Gunther.
 Er ist an Schätzen reicher als ich selbst.
- X. 103. 641. 2. (577)
 "Er hat, wie ich, wohl Burgen und weites Land."
1231. Gunther.
 Er ist ein König, wie ich selbst.
- X. 103. 641. 3. (577)
 "Er ist ein reicher König: dess sollt Ihr sicher sein."
1704. Brunhild.
 Wo sind die Herren von Burgund?
- XIV. 141. 877. 1-2. (794)
 Da sprach die Frau Brünhilde: "Berufet mir zur Stund'
 Hierher den Herrn vom Rheine; dem thu' ich Solches kund."
1754. Hagen.
 Der Mann muss sterben, der Dir das gethan!
- XIV. 143. 890. 2-4. (807)
 Sie sagte ihm die Märe. Er gelobt' ihr gleich zur Hand,
 Dass dafür ernten müsste den Lohn Kriemhilden's Mann,
 Oder er wollte nimmer fröhlich leben fortan.
144. 893. 4. (810)
 "Darüber will ich sterben, oder es geht ihm an den Leib."

1762-1764. Giselher.

So wird das Ernst? Um einen kleinen Fehl
Wollt Ihr den treu'sten Mann der Erde morden?
Mein König und mein Bruder, sage Nein!

XIV. 143. 891. 3-892. 4. (808 f.)

Dazu kam auch Giselher, der schönen Ute Kind;
Da er ihr Reden hörte, sprach er alsbalde treugesinnt:
"Ihr viel guten Recken, warum thut ihr das?
Traun, es verdiente Siegfried niemals solchen Hass,
Dass er darum verlieren sollte Leben und Leib.
Es ist ja gar geringe, um was da zürnet ein Weib."

1872. Siegfried.

Ich zieh' allein mit meinen Nibelungen.

XV. 147. 912. 1-2. (829)

"Ihr und Eure Recken sollt das Haus bewahren;
Mit denen, die ich habe, lasst mich zu ihnen fahren."

2056 f. Kriemhild.

Ohm, Ihr werdet doch

An ihm nicht rächen, was nur ich verbrach?

XV. 148. 919. 4. (836)

"Er soll es nicht entgelten, hab' ich Brünhild was gethan."

2064. Hagen.

Nun, nun, sie wird's vergessen.

Mss. H Th. 2061 f.

Vielleicht

Ist sie schon ausgesöhnt.

XV. 149. 921. 1. (838)

Er sprach: "Ihr werdet versöhnet wohl bald nach diesen Tagen."

2417-2419. Siegfried.

Mord! Mord! — Ihr selbst? Bei'm Trinken! Gunther, Gunther,
Verdient' ich das um Dich? Ich stand Dir bei
In Noth und Tod.

XVI. 154. 951. 4. (866)

"Auch hab' ich wohl Andres nicht verdient um die Degen."

164. 1018. 2-3. (930)

"Was helfen meine Dienste, da ihr mich habt erschlagen?
Ich war euch stets getreue; dess entgelt' ich nun."

165. (1025. 3. (C 1006)

"Ich schirmt' Euch Leib und Ehre in furchtbarer Noth."

2561f. Gunther.

Ein Eid!

Ihr thut kein Mensch mehr weh.

XIX. 188. 1168. 1-2. (1071)

Da sprach König Gunther: "Ich schwur ihr einen Eid,
Dass ich ihr nimmer wieder thäte welches Leid."

3074. Ute.
 Sie bieten's Dir.
 Kriemhild.
 Zum Hohn.
- XX. 204. 1264. 1-3. (1158)
 Da sprach die Jammersreiche: "Euch verbiet' es Gott
 Und allen meinen Freunden, dass sie irgend Spott
 An mir Armen üben.
- 3751 f. Hagen.
 Die Hochzeit
 Erst bei der Wiederkehr!
- XXVII. 279. 1740. 2-3. (1624)
 "So ihr wieder heimwärts nach Burgunden kehrt,
 (Denn also ist es bräuchlich), dann geb' ich euch mein Kind."
4066. Kriemhild.
 So hat Euch ein Verräther auch gewarnt.
4069. Dietrich.
 Ich bin der Mann, ich, Dietrich, Vogt von Bern!
- XXVIII. 289. 1804. 2. (1686)
 "Ich bin's, der hat gewarnt die Fürsten reich und gut."
4366. Hagen.
 Nun freilich, diesen schlug ich todt.
- XXIX. 297. 1846. 2. (1728)
 "Ich bin's nun einmal, Hagen, der Siegfrieden schlug."
- 4370 f. Kriemhild.
 Nun thut, was Euch gefällt. Ich frag' nicht mehr,
 Ob Ihr's zu Ende bringt.
- XXIX. 297. 1848. 2-3. (1730)
 "Was ihm darob geschieht,
 Soll mich nun nicht kümmern, ihr Etzel's gute Degen."
4376. Hagen.
 So gilt's hier wirklich Mord und Ueberfall?
- XXX. 306. 1906. 3. (1784). Volker.
 "Wollt ihr auf's Morden ziehen, Kriemhilden's Hofgeleit?"
4381. Hagen.
 Der Helme Glanz verrieth Euch längst.
- XXX. 305. 1896. 2-3. (1775)
 "Dass Volker der kühne Helme glänzen sah
 Fernher aus dem Finstern."
5124. Rüdeger.
 Hab' ich sie nicht selbst in's Land gebracht?
5132.
 Doch hab' ich sie auf Treue hergeführt.
5164.
 Und sie geleitet bis zu Eurer Schwelle.

XXXVII. 356. 2220. 3. (2081)

Ich war ja ihr Geleite in meines Herren Land.

Cf. XXVII. 282, 1762. 2. (1646)

"Will ich euch selbst geleiten; da seid ihr wohl bewährt."

5133 f. Rüdiger.

Und darf ich sie nicht schützen gegen Dich,
So leih' ich Dir doch auch nicht meinen Arm.

5165 f.

Kann ich das Schwert wohl gegen sie erheben,
Nun sie in ihren grössten Nöthen sind?

XXXVII. 359. 2236. 4. (2096)

"Und gab' ihnen meine Gabe: wie hülff' ich nun zu ihrem Tod?"

5142. Rüdiger.

Ich kann nicht sagen, das Du lügst.

XXXVII. 357. 2226. 1. (2087)

"Das ist nicht zu läugnen."

5162 f. Rüdiger.

Ich habe sie mit Wein und Brot begrüsst,
Als sie die Donaugränze überschritten.

XXXVII. 359. 2236. 2-3. (2096)

"Ich habe sie geladen heim zu meinem Haus;
Trinken so wie Speise ich ihnen gütlich bot."

5280-5282. Rüdiger.

Kriemhild, ich habe Dir den Eid geschworen
Und muss ihn halten, das erklär' ich laut
Für meine Pflicht und mäkle nicht daran.

XXXVII. 360. 2243. 3. (2103)

Er sprach: "Wohl muss ich leisten Euch nach meinem Eid."

But by far the most numerous borrowings from the epic are of suggestions, not words. Generally these suggestions are of incident, or scene, or character delineation, which Hebbel adapted to his own uses, sometimes referring to an entire adventure with a line or two, sometimes materially enlarging upon a dramatic detail which the Nibelungenlied passes over lightly, or in other instances making a slight change that explains or ennobles the motivation. Most of these changes are mentioned in the general discussion of Hebbel's use of the Nibelungenlied which follows, and do not require citation here. It will only be necessary to give a few examples of Hebbel's adaptation of minor incidents to the purposes of his drama.

1958-1960. Hagen.

Ist der Friede

Noch zwischen Euch nicht wieder hergestellt?
Will er vielleicht sein Mannesrecht missbrauchen?

XV. 148. 920. 2-4. (837)

“Auch hat er so zerbläuet deswegen meinen Leib!
Dass ich es je geredet, beschwerte ihm den Muth;
Das hat wohl gar gerochen der Degen tapfer und gut.”

2200 f. Giselher.

Ich zieh' nicht mit.

Gerenot.

Ich wahrlich auch nicht.

2298. Hagen.

Hatten sie

Zugleich den Muth, zu warnen und zu hindern?

4446. Kriemhild.

In den Wald seit Ihr nicht mitgeritten.

4468. Und wer nicht half der schwieg doch, statt zu warnen.

XV. 152. (943. 2-4. (C 923)

Giselher und Gerenot

Wollten nicht jagen reiten. Ich weiss nicht, welcher Neid
Sie abhielt, ihn zu warnen.

154. 954. 4. (869)

Gernot hatt' und Giselher daheim zu bleiben begehrt.

2775-2777. Hagen.

Ei, wenn sie mir die Hand

Seit uns'rer Jagd nicht einmal wieder reichte,

So hat sie Dich ja auch wohl nicht geküsst.

2872 f.

Ja, ja, sie bot die Wange endlich dar,
Weil (*Er deutet auf Giselher und Ute.*)

Dieser täglich bat und Diese weinte.

XVIII. 179. 1115. 2. (1021)

Begannen sie zu flehen Ute und Gerenot.

XIX. 184. 1140. (1046)

Sie sass nach ihrem Leide, das ist völlig wahr,
Nach ihres Mannes Tode wohl an vierthalb Jahr,
Dass nie ein Wort zu Gunthern aus ihrem Mund geschah,
Und ihren Feind Hagen sie in der Zeit nimmer sah.

1146. 4. (1052)

Zu flehen begann da Giselher, der sehr weidliche Mann.

185. (1147. 1. (C 1124)

Sie sprach: “Ich muss ihn grüssen, da ihr mir's nicht erlasst.”

1149. 1. (1053)

Ich will den König grüssen.

1150. 1-2. (1054)

Da sie verschmerzen wollte auf Gunther den Hass,
Dass er sie küssen sollte, das ziemt' ihm desto bass.

2912 f. Hagen.

sie hätte

Ein Heer damit geworben.

2918 f. Das war das Mittel, Freunde zu erwerben
Und zu erhalten.

XIX. 187. 1165. 2-4. (1068)

So dass Hagen sagte, sollte sie noch leben

Nur kleine Zeit, so würde man sie gewinnen sehn

Zu Dienst so manchen Recken, dass ihnen schlimm es müsst' ergehn.

1167. 3-4. (1070)

“Sie bringt mit ihrer Gabe noch solch ein Werk zu Tag,
Dass es wohl die kühnen Burgunden gereuen mag.”

XX. 212. 1319. 4. (1212)

“Ich weiss gar wohl, was Kriemhild bald mit diesem Schatze thut.”

3323 f. Rumolt.

Vergesst Ihr die Geschenke? Wartet doch,
Bis sie herüber kommen.

3325-3327. Volker.

Das find' ich wunderlich,

Erst schlagen sie die reichen Gaben aus,

Dann lassen sie sie liegen!

XXIV. 247. 1537. (1427)

Da liess der reiche König, (er war den Boten hold,)

Aus tugendlicher Sitte hertragen sein Gold

Auf den breiten Schilden; er war reich daran.

Auch ward reiche Gabe von Freunden ihnen gethan.

1538. 3-248. 1539. 4. (1428 f)

Da ward so reiche Gabe den Boten dar getragen,

Aus Furcht vor Etzel konnten sie's nimmer zu empfangen wagen.

Da sprach der Bote Swemmel, zum Könige gewandt:

“Herr König, Eure Gabe lasst bleiben hier zu Land;

Wir dürfen's nicht führen. Der König uns verbot,

Dass wir irgend Gabe nähmen; auch ist uns gar wenig noth.”

3232-3234. Kriemhild.

Mag die Welt

Mich Anfangs schmä'h'n, sie soll mich wieder loben,

Wenn sie das Ende dieser Dinge sieht!

XX. 210. 1305. 1-3. (1199)

Da dachte die Getreue: “Da ich nun gewann

Also viel der Freunde, lass' ich die Welt fortan

Reden, was sie wolle.”

3337 f. Volker.

Hagen kommt

Mit seiner letzten Fracht.

XXV. 261. 1623. 3. (1512)

Schiffmeister war Hagen.

3352-3354. Volker.

wir kommen. . . .

. . . . mit unserm ganzen Staat.

Werbel.

Mit einem Heer, ja wohl.

4009 f. Kriemhild.

Wir glaubten schon, es käm' ein Feind gezogen,

So gross ist Euer Tross.

4035. Ihr kommt mit einem Heer.

XXIV. 246. 1525. 2. (1415)

Achtzig ihrer Recken herführen an den Rhein.

1528. 1. (1418)

Hagen wählte tausend, die ihm wohlbekannt.

XXV. 251. 1557. 2-3. (1447)

Sechzig über tausend, so hört' ich diese Mär',

Dazu neuntausend Knechte, zu der Festlichkeit.

XXVI. 273. 1701. 3-4. (1587)

Sechzig schneller Recken und tausend Ritter gut,

Dazu neuntausend Knechte.

3584. f. Gudrun.

Welche muss ich küssen, Mutter?

Göteline.

Die Kön'ge und den Tronjer!

XXVII. 274. 1705. 2-1706. 3. (1591 f). Rüdiger.

"Ihr sollt gar wohl empfangen die edlen Könige hehr,

Wenn sie mit ihrem Gesinde hierher zu Hofe nah'n;

Auch Hagen, Gunther's Dienstmann, sollt Ihr mit schönern Gruss
empfah'n.

"Noch Einer, der heisst Dankwart, kommt mit ihrer Fahrt;

Der Andre heisset Volker, an Züchten wohlbewahrt.

Die Sechse sollt Ihr küssen; so auch die Tochter mein."

276. 1719. 1-3. (1604)

Die Markgräfinn küsste die Könige alle drei;

So that auch ihre Tochter. Auch Hagen stund dabei;

Ihr Vater hiess sie ihn küssen.

4992. Hildebrand.

Da ist der Todtenberg!

5035. Hildebrand.

Sie werfen wieder Todte aus den Fenstern.

5054. Dietrich.

An sieben tausend Heunen liegen dort.

XXXIV. 334. 2082. 3. (1947)

Ihr müsst die todten Leute aus dem Hause tragen.

335. 2085. 1-3. (1950)

Da folgten sie dem Rathe, und trugen vor die Thür'

Siebentausend Todte; die warfen sie herfür.
Vor des Saales Stiege sah man sie niederfallen.

5292-5294. Rüdiger.

Das Alles fahre hin, ich fleh' zu Euch
Um meine Seele, die verloren ist,
Wenn Ihr mich nicht von diesem Eide lös't.

5312. Kriemhild.

Glaubst Du, dass ich die Seele rettete.

XXXVII. 357. 2226. 3. (2087)

"Dass ich die Seel' verliere, das hab' ich nicht geschworen."

5371. Hagen.

Hätt' ich nur einen Schild.

XXXVII. 364. 2271. 2-3. (2131)

"Den Schild, den Frau Götlinde gegeben mir zu tragen,
Den haben mir die Heunen zerhauen an der Hand."

A further discussion of Hebbel's methods in dealing with the Nibelungenlied as source may be grouped under the heads of omissions, contractions, and expansions of material. William Morris, in his epic treatment of the Volsungasaga, had before him the task of expanding the Norse story of forty-three short chapters into a poem of four or five times its length. Hebbel, with his desire to retain every essential feature of the Nibelungenlied, had to solve the problem of contracting the poem, which, in the Braunfels translation, contained 2459 strophes, or 9836 lines, into a trilogy of 5456 lines. The solving of the problem necessitated great pruning and paring, especially as the gaps of the epic required numerous additions, while Hebbel's deepening of character and enlargement and invention of incident and motivation called for entire new speeches and even scenes. The question is how Hebbel went about his work of selection, in order to reach the mean between the too much and the too little, and what was the nature of his omissions and his contractions.

The nature of Hebbel's omissions can best be understood from his own sharply critical distinction between the character and function of the epic and the drama. "The lyric, and still more the dramatic poet, must keep all his portrayals between the conscious-unconscious (*Bewusst-Unbewussten*), therefore the style of this art is much more difficult than the

epic style, which reproduces life as in a mirror, while the former is to represent it as a process of development, and yet at the same time as a complete whole.”¹ “Life is a fearful necessity, which must be accepted with faith and belief, but which no one comprehends; and tragic art which, in annihilating the individual life as opposed to the idea, rises at the same time above it, is the most penetrating flash of human consciousness, that, to be sure, can illumine nothing which it does not at the same time consume. Tragic art arises from such conceptions alone, like a strange, mysterious flower out of the night-shadows, for even though epic and lyric poetry now and then may play with the variegated bubbles of appearance, dramatic poetry has absolutely to grasp the inner relations, within which all isolated existence arises and passes away, and these are frightful in view of the limited vision of man.”²

“The epic has, as our æstheticians assure us, an incontestable right to useless comparisons; it lingers where it lists, and depicts what it pleases. . . . As far as the drama is concerned, it is still to be considered that though epic and lyric show us narrators and singers, thus, in a certain sense, characteristic masks with definite qualities, the drama is to depict for us naked man as he acts and speaks out of his nature. . . . The place where the dramatic poet ventures to employ a simile must be a place especially suited, and the comparison itself must be so rich a one that it not merely makes us forget the doubly perceptible pause, but raises us also above the unusual part of seeing the people in the pictures spin metaphors which do not occur to them in real life.”³ Parallel with a portion of his work on the “Nibelungen” came the composition of “Mutter und Kind,” so that Hebbel had occasion to observe in his own writing the necessary differences between the two forms of poetic art, the narrative poem and the drama. To Friedrich von Uechtritz he wrote at this time: “In the drama, I feel as though I were going barefoot over glowing iron, in heaven’s name, only no pauses; what does not go along with the first impulse does not belong to the thing. In the epic, on the other hand, one might, and one must take every-

¹ Tgb. II. 2365.

² Bw. I. 155; Tgb. II. 2721.

³ Tgb. III. 3669.

thing along, the object, as well as the shadow which it casts." ¹

With these ideas as to the essential nature of epic and drama, Hebbel set to work to find the dramatic kernel in each scene and situation, and to avoid the purely episodic, to omit whatever of detail or of unnecessary description were non-essentials to the main action, and belonged purely to the epic mass of the material; while he contracted or combined such incidents as were too deeply imbedded in the epic whole to be capable of dramatic treatment singly, or such as could be brought together within the compass of one scene, and thus contribute toward dramatic conciseness.

Hebbel omits the incidents of Siegfried's education which are set forth in such detail in the second Canto, and his decision upon the journey to Worms and the preparations for it, since all that we need to know regarding these points may be indicated after Siegfried's entrance into Worms. Thus, the scenes with Siegfried's father and mother are entirely omitted as unessential, and we hear of them only incidentally. The fourth Canto, with its lengthy description of Siegfried's war with the Danes and Saxons, and the events immediately resulting from it, are merely referred to in the words of praise which are bestowed on Siegfried. The war itself was an episode which had no place in the drama, except to form a basis for Hagen's treacherous conduct. So, too, the preparations for the trip to Iceland, and the reception there after a twelve days' journey, as well as the games by which Siegfried won Brunhild,² are omitted save for the few words of greeting between Brunhild and Siegfried in "Siegfrieds Tod," Act II.; and Siegfried's journey to the Nibelungs, which forms the subject of the eighth Canto, is barely mentioned in the scene where the dwarfs carry in the Nibelungen treasure. The omission of the long description of the preparations for Brunhild's reception³ finds its only compensation in the first short scene of the second act of "Siegfrieds Tod," and the tourney in honor of her coming is merely hinted at by Rumolt and Dankwart in the first scene of Act III. Hebbel consistently omits

¹ Bw. II. 238.

² VI.

³ XI.

the details of tourney, of pageantry, and of apparel which are so characteristic a part of the mediæval version of the saga, but which, far from being an essential part of the story, often form for the modern reader tiresome descriptions and repetitions, and are pure excrescences on the saga material for the audience of a particular age.

Cantos XI., XII., and XIII., are taken up with an account of the return home of Siegfried with his wife, and of the events which took place in the ten years before their visit to Worms with Siegmund, at Gunther's invitation. All this causes a protraction of time and incident which are both undramatic and unnatural from a modern literary standpoint, and Hebbel has omitted these events without depriving us of any essential details. He omits Kriemhild's first dream of the swine and simply mentions the second, which is introduced with great naturalness in answer to a jest from Siegfried. The part which Siegmund and his men take in the mourning and burial of Siegfried is, of course, also omitted, as well as their return home, and Kriemhild's decision to remain at Worms.¹

Practically all of Canto XIX., "How the Nibelungen hoard came to Worms," and the first part of XX., "How King Etzel sent to the land of the Burgundians for Kriemhild," are omitted, between the closing scene of "Siegfrieds Tod" and the opening scene of "Kriemhilds Rache." Between the close of the first act of "Kriemhilds Rache," where Kriemhild consents to wed Etzel, and the beginning of the second act, where Etzel's messengers are departing after having brought an invitation to the feast of the solstice, occur a series of events in the Nibelungenlied which can well be replaced by suggestion and reference only. They are in Canto XXI., "How Kriemhild journeyed to the Huns," Canto XXII., "How Kriemhild was received by the Huns," and Canto XXIII., "How Kriemhild thought to avenge her sorrows." Of the journey to the Huns and the wedding in Vienna, we have the merest mention later, on the occasion of the reception of the Burgundians at Bechlarn,² but we have constant hints that the messengers have been sent by Kriemhild. Canto XXIV., "How Werbel

¹ XVII. f.

² 3596 f., 3600.

and Schwemmel brought the message," is thus also omitted up to the arrival of the messengers at Worms. The actual events in the journey of the Burgundians to the land of the Huns are practically omitted, save for the important scenes at Bechlarn¹ which complete the second act. From the sixth scene of the third act, the events follow with some degree of closeness, though with great omission of detail, the last Cantos of the Nibelungenlied: XXXII., "How Blödelein was slain," and XXXV.,² "How Iring was slain," are simply referred to, the one in Dankwart's words announcing the slaughter of the servants and in Dietrich's words:—

Irnfred und Blödel und die Völker mit;³

the other, in the lines:—

Der tapf're Iring flog der Schaar voran,⁴

and

Der stolze Iring fiel.⁵

Several of the omissions were necessary for reasons of stage economy as well as for dramatic concentration; such are events which bear epic description but cannot well be represented on the stage. In this category are the contests between Siegfried and Brunhild,⁶ the incident on the chase with the bear which Siegfried brings in to frighten the huntsmen, the race to the spring, Hagen's attempted flight after the murder, and Siegfried's revenge through the blow with his shield,⁷ Hagen's encounter with the mermaids, and his slaying of the boatman.⁸

As too repulsive to a modern audience, Hebbel omits Siegfried's corporal punishment of Kriemhild for her unruly tongue,⁹ while he passes over as lightly as possible Siegfried's assistance on the wedding night, and substitutes for the first night's combat the Amazon defiance of Brunhild on the ship.

There are, as well, a number of minor omissions such as that of the ring, which the epic makes Siegfried take from Brunhild besides the girdle; and that of the formalities of an oath on Siegfried's part to substantiate his innocence. Not

¹ XXVII., XXVIII., 1st part.

² C. XXXIV.

³ 5057.

⁴ 5047. ⁵ 5055. ⁶ VII.

⁷ XVI.

⁸ XXV.

⁹ XIV.

one of these omissions interferes in the slightest degree with the general trend of the action, or obscures the connection of events and their motivation.

Hebbel has retained all the characters that are essential to the action, but numerous minor persons of the *Nibelungenlied* are omitted. Siegmund and Sieglinde are merely mentioned, and we have no Ortwin of Metz, High Steward to the Burgundian Kings. We only hear the names of Lüdegast and Lüdenger, of Blödel and Irnfried, while Gere, Hawart, Hunolt, Pilgrim Bischof von Passau, and the numerous characters who have a name rather than a place in the whole are omitted.

Not only in radical omissions of narrative descriptions and episodic details does Hebbel strive for dramatic concentration, but also in his scene grouping, which calls for numerous contractions and combinations in the material. Many of the chief contractions have already been indicated under the head of omissions. Notable and, of course, necessary for dramatic treatment is the material shortening of time. The Prologue and "Siegfrieds Tod" cover a space of a few months at most, while the compass of events which they include extends over a period of more than twelve years in the *Nibelungenlied*. The lapse of time between Brunhild's entrance into Worms and Siegfried's death is but a few days, and the only case in which Hebbel follows the epic is in having the space of three days elapse between the quarrel of the queens and the coming of the false messengers.¹ The war with the Danes and Saxons occurs on the way to Brunhild, the quarrel scene takes place the morning after the double wedding, and no return to Xanten prolongs the rapid course of the action. Between Siegfried's death and the final downfall of the Burgundians, the *Nibelungenlied* has a space of twenty-six years, and Hebbel approximates this by indicating that seven years had elapsed after Kriemhild's marriage before the coming of the Burgundians, and twenty in all since her marriage to Siegfried.² In the *Nibelungenlied* her marriage to Etzel extends over a period of seven years before a child is born to them, but they are

¹ Nn. 2068. Nl. XV. 820. References are here given simply to Lachmann's text.

² 3709 f.

married another six years before the visit of the Burgundians. Why Hebbel chose to retain the long interval of time after Siegfried's death would not be apparent if we did not realize how he strove in every way to account for the changes, or rather the course of development, in Kriemhild's nature. The very characteristic in his wife's interpretation of Raupach's Chriemhild which so filled him with admiration was the marvellous delineation of this evolution in Chriemhild's own breast, and Hebbel wished to depict the possibility, still more, the necessity for her awful vengeance. And so he gives her this long period in which to attempt to gain redress in every straightforward way, a period which, instead of granting her satisfaction and consolation, brings her only added injury and with it an ever growing sense of wrong, and the sacred duty of revenge. A slight inconsistency in Hebbel's treatment of time is seen in Giselher's plea in the last act of "Kriemhild's Rache":—

Habe doch Erbarmen
Mit meinem jungen Leib.¹

For since he was but ten years younger than Siegfried at the latter's entrance, he cannot be a stripling now.²

A contraction brought about by a combination of events to bring them into one scenic picture is found in the Prologue, where, at Siegfried's first appearance in Worms, occur the games, Ute's interpretation of Kriemhild's dream, and Siegfried's first sight of her. This is one of the most admirable instances of contraction in the whole play, for scene iii. is a charming and absolutely natural picture, and gives the spectator an opportunity to hear of Siegfried's prowess from an immediate onlooker, while it indicates the rapid workings of love in the heart of the inexperienced Kriemhild. Gunther, too, has learned of Brunhild before Siegfried's entrance, so that he is prepared to make the proposition at once to win Siegfried's help by giving him his sister. The fourth scene of the Prologue excellently connects the accounts of the dragon and hoard, with additions from Norse sources, so that, with the opening scene of "Siegfrieds Tod," we are fully acquainted

¹ 5217 f.

² Cf. 433.

with the course of past events and prepared for coming developments.

Concentrated into one scene are Brunhild's arrival and welcome, and Siegfried's betrothal to Kriemhild, which in the *Nibelungenlied* occurs later, at the wedding feast of Gunther and Brunhild. The quarrel scene takes place directly after Kriemhild obtains the proud knowledge of Siegfried's superiority over Gunther, as shown in his contest with Brunhild. The epic has the strife begun earlier, and renewed at the cathedral, both before and after mass; Hebbel concentrates it into a single scene. In the *Lied*, Hagen goes to Brunhild later to learn her trouble; here, he is on hand with the king at once, and ready to plan the vengeance which Brunhild demands. The incident with the first false messengers is omitted in its detail, and only receives mention by Hagen to arouse Siegfried against Lüdegast and Lüdeger.

All the events in Act IV., preparatory to Siegfried's murder, are well grouped together in a hall at Worms, and the events of the chase are materially shortened in Act V., both by the omissions already indicated, and by the mere indication of Siegfried's marvellous deeds.

Act I., scene i. of "Kriemhilds Rache" shows another simple and necessary contraction, in giving to Rüdeger only one audience with the Burgundians, instead of a second on the third day, as in the *Nibelungenlied*, and only one with Kriemhild, instead of two on successive days. Act II., scene i., brings together the departure of Kriemhild's messengers, which here takes place at the Danube after the crossing, the account of Hagen's experiences with the boatmen and the mermaids, and the incident with the chaplain. Hebbel could do no more than indicate much in these events, but he wished to retain the mythical background, in order to presage the gloom and downfall awaiting the Burgundians.

The concentration of all the events connected with Kriemhild's messengers and with the journey to Etzel's court into Act II. has been partially pointed out. Thus the main interest in this expedition is centred upon Kriemhild's attitude, Hagen's suspicions, and the part which he, Rüdeger, and Die-

trich play during the journey; it is not diffused over the details concerning the reception of the messengers, the planning for the departure, the separate episodes on the way, and the later addition of the visit to Bishop Pilgrim of Passau. The entire scene at Bechlarn occurs in the reception hall, while the epic has the betrothal of Giselher and Gudrun take place later at the feast.

Ute's dream is merely mentioned in Act II.,¹ and is introduced later in passing, to give opportunity for new light on Kriemhild's character and motives.²

From the eighth scene of Act III., the contractions are numerous, but are, almost without exception, those of the details in which the last terrible stages of the Nibelungenlied so richly abound, and which would have lent an excessive gruesomeness of incident and an altogether epic breadth to the drama. Chief among the changes resulting from these contractions is the minor part which Hildebrant plays in the last combat, where he is simply in charge of the Amelungen archers, and where his importance lies principally in his connection with Dietrich.

Hebbel's absolute additions to the material in the Nibelungenlied will be treated later; they are more numerous than his enlargements. Under the latter head may be classed the games of the Prologue which find only a general mention in the epic; so, too, though not to so great an extent, did he enlarge upon the scene preceding the double wedding, when Brunhild asserts her disapproval of Kriemhild's marriage to Siegfried.

The incident regarding Siegfried's attitude towards the false messengers is excellently enlarged upon in a scene which shows his own clean, straightforward nature to the best advantage, and his righteous indignation at the perfidy which he thinks the Danes and the Saxons have exercised against the Burgundians.³ He gives expression to his own character in the lines:—

Ich kann
Nichts hassen, als den Treubruch, den Verrath,
Die Gleissnerei und all' die feigen Laster,

¹ 3380 f.

² 3833 ff., cf. 4261 f.

³ S. T. IV. ii.

Auf denen er herankriecht, wie die Spinne
Auf ihren hohlen Beinen.¹

Hebbel also skilfully enlarges upon the part which Hagen plays in bringing the Burgundians to the point of consenting to Siegfried's murder, and of his deliberate and cunning plan to learn from Kriemhild the nature of Siegfried's vulnerability. Excellently drawn is the scene in which Hagen, while apparently trying to calm Kriemhild's fears, arouses within her those very feelings of anxiety and apprehension which produce the mood conducive to her confidence; characteristic, too, is the scene where Siegfried learns of the second company of messengers, and in his rage is the more ready for the chase which Hagen offers as a substitute. Hebbel enlarges materially upon the farewell scene between Siegfried and Kriemhild. Here she vainly attempts to keep him at home, and when she fails in this, she tries without avail to disclose to him her incautious betrayal of his secret;² he enlarges upon the fears which fill her mind and send her to Gerenot and Giselher for help, which cause her appeal to Frigga, and which furnish an excellent insight into Kriemhild's feelings of sorrow for wrong-doing, anxiety for her beloved, and distrust of the Burgundians.³ She is aroused to the state of nervous tension that makes all her emotions and actions on the morning after the chase natural and inevitable.

Dietrich's warning as long planned and carried out with definite purpose is an enlargement which tends to elevate his character to that of an important personage in the crisis of the action, while his journey with Hildebrant to Bechlarn, for the purpose of delivering the message in time to allow the Burgundians to turn back, brings into play, at the earliest possible moment, his share in the action. A pretty incident in passing centres about Nudung's shield, the gift which Hagen carried from Bechlarn, while the hall, which manuscript C briefly mentions, is given full description in "Kriemhilds Rache," Act III., scene vi. Hebbel also emphasizes the Hunnish cowardice which the epic intimates; he enlarges upon Etzel's

¹ 1814-1818.

² S. T. IV. xi.-xii.

³ S. T. IV. xiii.-xvi.

excuses for Volker's slaying of a Hun, and adds, as reason, the fact that the Burgundians believed themselves betrayed, and that their confidence as guests must therefore be restored.

The scenes in which Rüdiger begs to be released from his vow, receive here their first true expression and fully show Rüdiger's innocence, as well as impress upon us the deeds of kindness and charity which had characterized Kriemhild at Worms, and had prevented Rüdiger from suspecting the depth of her insatiable hatred.

There are, in the "Nibelungen," a number of changes in the material which come under none of the heads just considered, and which yet belong to a discussion of the epic as a source. Many of them are of minor importance, and without apparent reason; others are for purposes of motivation and character portrayal. Various minor touches bring out Volker's minstrel knowledge of people and things and perhaps for this reason make him tell the tale of Brunhild and Siegfried, and warn against the fatal wooing,¹ while, as the more important character, he, instead of Dankwart, is the fourth member of the expedition to Isenland. As ennobling Siegfried's character, we have the fear of Kriemhild replaced by Ute's confident feeling that Siegfried is not the knight to live when all others fall;² his indifference to the presents of Kriemhild changed to joy at the smallest token;³ his motive for drinking last to honor Gunther changed to a penance for his slight harshness to Kriemhild at parting.⁴ The Nibelungenlied has Kriemhild greet Brunhild first, Hebbel more naturally gives Ute the initiative;⁵ in the epic Kriemhild demands the right of entering the cathedral first, here she is driven to take precedence by Brunhild's taunts and demands;⁶ in the epic she shows absolute lack of thought for her child, here her feelings are explained, as well as Giseler's brotherly aid in sending him to S'egmund's court.⁷

Hagen's defiance and hatred are emphasized by his brutal cry even before Siegfried is dead:—

¹ 653 f.

² Nl. IX. 517; Nn. 1005 ff.

³ Nl. IX. 522; Nn. 1048 ff.

⁴ Nl. XVI. 919; Nn. 2400-2404.

⁵ Nl. X. 545; Nn. 1093 ff.

⁶ Nl. XIV. 770; Nn. 1659 ff.

⁷ 3024 f.

Haut Zweige von den Bäumen,
Wir brauchen eine Bahre.¹

It is he who proposes saying that robbers have slain Siegfried; it is he who drags Siegfried's body to Kriemhild's door, instead of having it done; and his defiance at the coffin is emphasized by his taking of Balmung at the very time when Siegfried's open wounds testify against him. The incident of the shield filled with darts, which Hagen is obliged to let fall, and which is later replaced by Rüdeger, is an added example of Hebbel's indifference to details. In the *Nibelungenlied*, Dankwart's shield is so filled with spears that he is forced to drop it, while Hagen's shield is hewn into pieces.² Yet Hebbel writes to Dingelstedt of his desire to retain "that feature in the old epic, that Hagen's shield becomes too heavy on account of the darts which have been shot into it, and that Rüdeger offers him his own before the beginning of the fight," a feature which he had found very beautiful, and had sought to rescue.³

The ennobling of Rüdeger's character has already been indicated; his nobility is enhanced by the fact that here Kriemhild proposes the vow to which Rüdeger, unconscious of its real significance, submits, while in the *Nibelungenlied* he secretly agrees to avenge her wrongs. Etzel here sets fire to the hall, instead of Kriemhild,⁴ for the Burgundians have refused to give up the Hunnish dead;⁵ the fight within the hall has been granted at the Huns' entreaties. The dumbly warning figure of Eckewart supplants the messenger whom the Burgundians find sleeping at the boundary.

Other minor changes are in making Gunther alone king of the Burgundians; in making Balmung an accidental acquisition,⁶ instead of a gift from Niblung's sons; in making Kriemhild question the Danish and Saxon kings themselves, instead of their messengers;⁷ in making Hagen, instead of Gunther, propose the chase;⁸ in showing to Siegfried the whole perfidy of the Burgundians before his death;⁹ in ascribing to Siegfried the proposal to separate on the hunt;¹⁰ in having Rumolt one of

¹ 2419 f. ² Nl. XXXII. 1881, XXXVII. 2131; Nn. 5007 ff. 5371 ff.

³ Bw. II. 73.

⁵ 5086 ff.

⁷ 994.

⁹ 2445 ff.

⁴ 5249 f., cf. 4968 ff.

⁶ 563 f.

⁸ 2200.

¹⁰ 2574.

the Burgundian guests at Etzel's court;¹ in having Hagen, instead of Rüdeger, postpone the wedding of Giselher and Gudrun until the return;² in placing the burying of the hoard the night before the departure;³ in not mentioning definitely the slayers of Volker,⁴ Dankwart,⁵ Gerenot, and Rüdeger;⁶ in bringing Hagen and Gunther bound together, instead of Hagen first.

Certain changes in names which Hebbel made have frequently no apparent reason, and simply show his regal indifference to wholly subordinate details. Hebbel was not at all concerned that every reader should understand each smallest item in his plays, as he showed in response to the Princess Witgenstein's question about Siegfried's reference to Roland,⁷ and in his reply to Uechtritz's doubts concerning a number of details, when he emphasized his opinion that a certain Rembrandtian "Helldunkel" belongs primarily to the nature of the drama.⁸ Thus Hebbel had doubtless no definite reason for giving the name of the Margrave of Bavaria to the ferryman whom Hagen slays. In the *Nibelungenlied*, the Margrave attempts to avenge the murder of the boatman, and is slain by Dankwart. Rather confusing than otherwise is his giving to Rüdeger's daughter the name Gudrun, by which Kriemhild is known in the Norse sources. Only in the *Klage* is her name mentioned, and here it is Dietelint.⁹ Hebbel calls the child of Kriemhild and Etzel Otnit, while in the epic his name is Ortlieb. In the *Nibelungenlied*, Iring is Hawart's vassal from Denmark, Irnfried is Landgrave of Thuringia, and both live at Etzel's court. In the last struggle, Iring is slain by Hagen, Irnfried by Volker. Hebbel introduces Iring and Thüring as northern kings, as noble lords of Denmark and Thuringia,¹⁰ while Thüring and Irnfried are later mentioned as two separate persons.¹¹

It will be seen from this cursory classification of the changes which Hebbel made on the basis of the South-German version

¹ K. R. II. i., note; V. iii.

² Nl. XXVII. 1624; Nn. 3751 f.

³ 4562 ff. ⁴ Nl. Hildebrant.

⁵ Nl. Helprich.

⁶ Nl. each by the other's hand.

⁷ Bw. II. 474 f., cf. 59.

⁸ *Ibid.* 290.

⁹ 1349, 2111, 2126.

¹⁰ K. R. Personen, 14 f., 3510 f., 4700.

¹¹ 5056 f.

of the saga, that the noted deviations from the transmitted material are for the most part of three kinds. First, those modifications which conduce to dramatic concentration and grouping; second, those which explain and motivate the relationship and the sequence of the action; and third, those which ennoble certain characters.

2. NORSE MYTH AND SAGA

Hebbel's use of the Norse sources is here grouped together for two reasons: in many instances, more than one source contains the material which Hebbel used, so that it cannot be said with certainty from which he directly drew; again, a classification of Norse borrowings under separate headings would cause unnecessary repetition. Hebbel never specifically mentions the Norse literature, though he refers indirectly to the mythology of the Edda.¹ We have Kulke's authority for the statement that he knew the Edda as well as he knew Shakespeare and Sophocles,² and in the majority of instances where a direct Norse borrowing can be traced, the material can be found in the Eddic songs or in the Snorra Edda.

Particularly in the character of Brunhild, Hebbel found it necessary to amplify the fragmentary account contained in the Nibelungenlied. Yet the Norse versions did not fully meet his requirements, and he acknowledges that his Brunhild is a more independent creation than the other principal characters of his "Nibelungen." In a letter to Friedrich von Uechtritz, November 21, 1856, he writes, "The most difficult problem was Brunhild, who stands out in the whole like an only half-written hieroglyphic; here I had to reckon on a creation, and in reward for my courage it came, too, at the right time."³ This is a hint which the investigator must not overlook in tracing sources, for the temptation frequently arises to find too much rather than too little. In the same letter, Hebbel gives a further hint as to sources which is valuable here: "With this I experienced a little triumph. In my picture,

¹ Nachl. II. 205; Bw. I. 130; Tgb. II. 3265.

² Kulke, 63.

³ Bw. II. 235; Tgb. IV. 6065.

valkyrie and norn flowed inseparably together, and this caused me anxiety when, after the intoxication, reflection set in again; then I found to my consolation in Grimm's German Mythology, that in the oldest times the people really regarded norms and valkyries as united." In several instances, Hebbel has evidently referred to Grimm in questions of mythology, where the deficiencies of the *Nibelungenlied* made Norse borrowings desirable.¹

106-108. Giselher.

Schon hört' ich tausend Zungen von ihm plappern,
Doch wie die Vögel durch einander zwitschern,
Es gab kein Lied.

2009. Kriemhild.

Was doch in Liedern schon gesungen wird.

3258 f. Und hätt'st Du nur das Ammenlied gehorcht,
Womit man jetzt am Rhein die Kinder schreckt.

Gripir prophesies that Sigurd's name shall live as long as the world stands.²

110. Volker.

Im tiefen Norden, wo die Nacht nicht endet.

Hebbel, in common with the other modern poets who have rejuvenated the figures of the *Nibelungen* saga, has regarded and described Brunhild's home as Iceland, and has connected her with Norse mythology. Aside from the fact that this local-

¹ In giving the citations, the following works have been used: for both Eddas, Simrock, "Die Edda die ältere und jüngere nebst den mythischen Erzählungen der Skalda übersetzt und mit Erläuterungen begleitet," 1851, which was the first complete translation of the Poetic Edda together with the mythical portions of the Prose Edda; the numbers in parenthesis refer to the text edition of Finnur Jónsson for the Eddic songs, and to the edition of Wilken for the prose Edda. For the *Volsungasaga*, references are by chapter to the edition of Ranisch, for the *Nornagestháttur* to the text edition of Wilken, for the *Thidrekssaga* to Unger's edition, and the translations of von der Hagen and Rassmann. The abbreviations are, as far as possible, those used by Gering in his "Vollständiges Wörterbuch zu den Liedern der Edda." In several instances, the titles of songs in Simrock's translation differ from those in Gering and the later editions. Thus, Bdr., Baldurs draumar, corresponds to Simrock, Vegtamskvidha; Rm., Reginsmöl, to Sigurdharkvidha Fafnisbana önnur; Sg., Sigurdharkviða en skamma, to Sigurdharkvidha Fafnisbana thridhja; Brs., Brot af Sigurdharkviðu or Sigurdharkviða en meire, to Brot af Brynhildarkvidhu; Ls., Lokasenna, to Oegisdrecca.

² Grp.

ization of Brunhild's kingdom had, in the early half of the nineteenth century, more followers than now, this choice has the distinct poetic value of a land geographically and historically well known, but rarely visited, and therefore shrouded in a certain romantic mystery. Hebbel has interwoven his description of the island with mention of Hekla and other volcanoes, of the aurora borealis, and with references to the animals and the pursuits of the far north.¹

120-127. Volker.

Du weisst von Runen, die geheimnisvoll
Bei dunkler Nacht, von unbekannten Händen
In manche Bäume eingegraben sind;
Wer sie erblickt, der kann nicht wieder fort,
Er sinnt und sinnt, was sie bedeuten sollen,
Und sinnt's nicht aus, das Schwert entgleitet ihm,
Sein Haar wird grau, er stirbt und sinnt noch immer:
Solch eine Rune steht ihr im Gesicht!

This is one of the many instances where Hebbel adds to or fashions over well-known mythology. The magic of runes was acknowledged throughout Norse territory. Odin, according to the *Hǫvumǫl*, invented them by sacrificing himself and hanging wounded for nine nights on the world-ash Yggdrasil.² Brynhild has been pricked by the sleep-thorn of Odin, into which he had scratched magic runes.³ After her awakening, she brings Sigurd a drink which has the magic of runes,⁴ and teaches him the uses and meanings of the various runic symbols,⁵ as Gripir had prophesied.⁶ In the Edda, it is through the magic of inscriptions within the cup that Grimhild succeeds in making Sigurd forget Brynhild and wed Gudrun.⁷ Kostbera, Hǫgni's wife, possesses an understanding of runic inscriptions, and on this account realizes the falseness of the messenger, and endeavors to dissuade the Burgundians from the journey to Atli.⁸

Hebbel connects the runes with North Germanic heathendom in its purest form. They play a part at the beginning

¹ 111 ff., 131, 827 ff., 880 ff.

² *Hǫv.* 139 f. (J V. 1 f.).

³ *Sd.* 2 (J3).

⁴ *Ibid.* 5 (J11).

⁵ *Ibid.* 6-19.

⁶ *Grp.* 17.

⁷ *Grp.* II. 22 (J23).

⁸ *Am.* 9, 11 f.; *Vs.* 24.

of Brunhild's earthly life, but she loses her direct relations with them through her Christian baptism. Frigga is the only absolute believer in their truth and power, and as the sole representative of uncontaminated heathendom, she alone is capable of deciphering the runic tablet which Odin brought with the child. The tablet has told that the child's games and sports would serve as a sign and hint for the actions of Frigga and her people. If Frigga had but read earlier the contents of the tablet, she would have refused to obey the priests who commanded the child's baptism, and would thus have kept her within the pale of absolute heathendom. The tablet had revealed that the knight who possessed Balmung and the Nibelungen hoard should ride through the sea of flame and win her, but Frigga declares that she must have read wrong, since the flame is extinguished without the wooer's making his appearance. Frigga has also read that prophetic revelations will be given to Brunhild "in der Stunde der Entscheidung," and this second sign she believes to be infallible. After Siegfried's death, Brunhild's sole indication of life, with the exception of her first awful curse, is to eat and drink and study the runes. Thus Hebbel indicates that she reenters the pales of heathendom after she has discovered the truth of the runic inscriptions and the intrigue of those who have taken her from her home and its old gods.¹

136-142. Volker.

Doch ist das öde Land, das sie gebär,
Auf seinen einz'gen Schatz auch eifersüchtig
Und hütet sie mit solcher neid'schen Angst,
Als würd' es in demselben Augenblick
Vom Meere, das es rings umbraust, verschlungen,
Wo sie dem Mann in's Brautbett folgt. Sie wohnt
In einer Flammenburg.

Hebbel does not make the difficulty of wooing Brunhild rest upon a decree or vow, as do the Norse versions. The reason given for the difficulty of the wooing is that the land is desirous of retaining its one great treasure, its queen, and that she fights to preserve her virginity. The poet combines here the Amazon

¹ 746 f., 768-780, 1247 f., 2800-2815.

of the Nibelungenlied, with her contests, and the Valkyrie of the north, with her protecting *Waberlohe*. In the Norse versions, she is asleep on a rock,¹ and her slumber, which, according to the decree of the Norns, cannot be broken,² is Odin's punishment for disobedience.³ According to *Sigrdrifomöl* and the *Volsungasaga*, Brynhild had replied to his decree that she should no longer act as Valkyrie by taking the vow that she would wed no man who knew fear;⁴ in the *Skáldskaparmál*, she vows to wed only him who can ride through the flame.⁵ In the *Helreið*, it is Odin who has destined for her the man who knows no fear.⁶

It is possible that Hebbel at first did not intend to combine the Norse sea of flame with the Middle High German contests. Manuscript H has, *ehrer Berg*, above that *Eisen-Burg*, and over this again *Flammenburg*, in the first description by Volker of Brunhild and her land. In Siegfried's account of his first visit to her, he says:—

Bald sperrt ein Flammensee
Den Weg.⁷

The Eddas, the *Volsungasaga*, and the *Nornagestssaga*, all mention a rock upon which Brynhild's fortress lies, and give to it the name of *Hindarfjall*; ⁸ in the *Helreið*, it is called *Skatalund*.⁹ It is described as surrounded by flame. *Oddrúnagrátr* has a combat take the place of the ride through the flames.¹⁰

189-191. Siegfried.

kühn genug, mit Thor
Zu kämpfen um den Donner, wenn sie ihn
In irgend einem Eichenhaine trafen.

674-676. Brunhild.

Den alten Göttern!
Jetzt herrscht das Kreuz und Thor und Odin sitzen
Als Teufel in der Hölle.

3126-3130. Giselher.

Und wenn die alten Knechte uns im Stall

¹ Fm. 43 (J8, Bugge 43).

⁵ Sk. chap. 41 (Wilken, p. 118).

² Fm. 44 (J9, Bugge 44).

⁶ Hlr. 9 (J10).

³ Fm. 43; Sd. 2 (J3).

⁷ 631 f., cf. also 772 f., 789-784.

⁴ Sd., prose between 4 and 5 (J3 and 11).

⁸ Sg. introductory prose (J Fm. bet. 9 and 10). Sk. 41, Fm. 42 (J7, Bugge 42); Vs. 20; Norn. 5.

⁹ Hlr. 9 (J10).

¹⁰ Od. 19.

Vom Donn'rer Thor erzählten, dass wir glaubten,
 Er dräue selbst beim falben Schein der Blitze
 Durch's Bodenloch hinein, so sah er aus,
 Wie Hagen, wenn er seine Lanze wirft.

Ms. Th. 3632.

Iring: Bei'm Hammer Thors.

Thor was probably next in importance to Odin among the Norse gods. He was the god of thunder, his symbol the hammer, and to him the oak tree was sacred.¹ It seems probable that Hebbel carried over this last-named mythological fact to Odin, for he speaks of *Wodans-Eiche*, and *Wodan's Eichenhain*.² Whether Hebbel attempted to be consistent in his use of the Norse form, Odin, and the German form, Wodan, it is difficult to say. Frigga consistently says Odin,³ and Volker, in his vision of the hoard, in which he reverts to the Norse account, uses the same form;⁴ the chaplain, on the other hand, says Wodan,⁵ while the northern king Iring says Wodan and Odin.⁶ Loki is the only other Norse god whom Hebbel mentions, the reason for his omission of Hönir in Volker's vision may be that Loki is well known in German literature, while Hönir is little cited.⁷

489-491. Siegfried.

Einen Mann nur giebt's,
 Der sie bewält'gen und, wie's ihm gefällt,
 Behalten oder auch verschenken kann!

774-776. Brunhild.

Der Recke mit der Balmungsklinge. . . .
 Der hoch zu Rosse ihn durchreiten sollte,
 Nachdem er Fafners blut'gen Hort erstritt.

2165-2168. Hagen.

Ein Zauber ist's,
 Durch den sich ihr Geschlecht erhalten will,
 Und der die letzte Riesin ohne Lust,
 Wie ohne Wahl, zum letzten Riesen treibt.⁸

The idea of fatalism in Siegfried's power over Brunhild, which Hebbel uses to account for his ability to conquer her, is suggested in the Edda:—

¹ Grimm, 147, Weinhold, 81.

² 1063, 3566.

³ 675, 877.

⁴ 4337.

⁵ 1063.

⁶ 3566, Ms. Th. 3530.

⁷ Rm. intr. prose.

⁸ Cf. also Ms. H. 3540 ff.

Brunhild.

Sein wäre sie,
Wenn es das Schicksal wollte.¹

Verheissen hatt ich mich
Dem hehren König,
Der mit Golde sass
Auf Granis Rücken.²

Darüber reiten
Nur sollte der Recke,
Der das Gold mir brachte
Im Bette Fafnirs.³

In the above quoted line 775, and very casually in lines 264 and 1351 f., we have the only references to Siegfried's horse, to which the Norse accounts give so much importance. According to the Volsungasaga, it was an offspring of Sleipnir, Odin's horse, and was given to Sigurd by the god himself. In the Regensmöl, Sigurd chooses his horse from the stud of Hjalprek; in the Thidrekssaga, it is a gift of Brynhild.⁴

527 f. Hagen.

Du warst schon dort?

Siegfried.

Ich war's! Doch warb ich nicht,

Auch sah ich nur, ich wurde nicht geseh'n!

647-650. Siegfried.

Denn Brunhild rührte, wie sie droben stand, '

In aller ihrer Schönheit nicht mein Herz,

Und wer da fühlt, dass er nicht werben kann,

Der grüsst auch nicht.

The incidents of Siegfried's first visit to Brunhild are, of course, inventions, but the account of an earlier visit and betrothal is given in some of the Eddic songs, in the Skáldskaparmál, and in the Volsungasaga.⁵

¹ Sg. 3, Gering; ihm selbst war das Weib versagt vom Schicksal.

² Sg. 36 (J40).

³ Hlr. 10 (J11), cf. Hlr. 9; Vs. 20, 27, 29.

⁴ Vs. 13; Rm. intr. prose; Thidr. 168; cf. Vkw. 15 (J14); H. H. I. 41 (J44); Sd. 17.

⁵ Grp. 15 ff.; Sd.; Sk. 41; Vs. 20 f. In Fm. 40 ff. (J5 ff., Bugge 40 ff.), Sg., and Hlr. 11 ff. (J12 ff.), Sigurd sees Brynhild for the first time when he rides through the flames in Gunnar's form.

542 f. Siegfried.

Die ihren Vater. . . .
Erschlagen.

2884 f. Hagen.

Die Nibelungen haben ihren Vater
Um Gold erschlagen.

Hebbel makes use of the Nibelungenlied in his account of the winning of the hoard, but in making King Niblung's sons the murderers of their father, he follows the Norse versions. In the *Regensmål* and *Volsungasaga*, Fafnir alone kills Hreidmar.¹ In the *Skáldskaparmál*, both brothers murder their father: *Da kamen die Brüder überein, ihren Vater des Goldes wegen zu tödten.*²

568 f. Siegfried.

und so ward ich Erbe
Des ganzen Hortes.

In the *Fafnesmål*, the birds say:—

“So soll er den Schatz besitzen allein,
Wie viel des unter Fafnir lag.”

“So sind die Schätze,
Die Fafnir besass,
Ihm allein zu eigen.”³

608. Siegfried.

Den Zauber der im Blut des Drachen steckte.

615-619.

Ja auch die Vögelssprache! Als ein Tropfe
Des Zauberbluts mir auf die Lippen sprang,
Verstand ich gleich das Zwitchern über mir,
Und hätt' ich nicht zu rasch ihn abgewischt,
So würd' ich auch, was hüpf und springt, versteh'n.

Here again Hebbel combines the Norse and German versions. Alberich discloses to Siegfried the secret of the dragon's blood to give invulnerability, and Siegfried discovers its power to impart an understanding of the language of birds. In the *Fafnesmål*, Regin drinks Fafnir's blood, and bids Sigurd roast the heart in order that he may eat it. Sigurd tests the meat to see if it is done, and, burning himself, he puts his finger in his

¹ Rm. prose between 9 and 10 (J A8 and A9); Vs. 14.

² Sk. 41.

³ Fm. 34 (J41), 38 (J33).

mouth, and thus understands at once the language of birds.¹ The *Guprúnarkviða* endows Gudrun also with an understanding of the voices of birds, by reason of eating Fafnir's heart.² *Fafnesmöl* and the *Volsungasaga* call the birds *igbor*, which Simrock translates *Adlerinnen*; Gering, *Spechtmeisen*. Hebbel changes to *Krähen, Dohlen und Eulen*.³ The *Thidrekssaga* alone of the older sources combines the double virtue of the dragon's blood to give an understanding of the language of birds, and to make the skin invulnerable.⁴ The possibility of its imparting an understanding of what hops and springs is a pure invention.

626-629. Siegfried.

Brunhild wird
Gennant, auch ich. Ein Knäuel dunkler Reden
Hinüber und herüber. Ein's nur klar,
Dass noch ein Abentheuer meiner harrt.

Again, in the *Fafnesmöl*, the birds say:—

“Auf dem Steine schläft
Die Streiterfahrene,
Und lodernd umleckt sie
Der Linde Feind.
Mit dem Dorn stach Yggr
Sie einst in den Schleier,
Die Maid, die Männer
Morden wollte.

“Schaun magst du, Mann,
Die Maid unterm Helme,
Die aus dem Gewühl trug
Wingskornir das Ross,
Nicht vermag Sigdrifas
Schlaf zu brechen
Ein Fürstensohn
Eh die Nornen es fügen.”⁵

632-634. Siegfried.

eine Burg, wie glühendes
Metall in bläulich-grünem Schimmer leuchtend,
Taucht drüben auf.

¹ Fm. 27 ff.; cf. Sf.; Sg.; Vs. 19.
² 625 f.

⁴ C. 166.

³ Gbr. intr. prose.

⁵ Fm. 43 f. (J8 f., Bugge 43 f.).

The birds describe Brynhild's abode in the *Fafnesmål*:—

Ein Hof ist auf dem hohen Hindarfiall
Ganz von Glut umgeben aussen.¹

634-637. Siegfried.

Da ruft

Die Dohle: Zieh' den Balmung aus der Scheide
Und schwing' ihn dreimal um das Haupt! Ich thu's
Und schneller wie ein Licht erlischt der See.

According to the songs of the Edda, the sea of flame seems to disappear upon Sigurd's approach.¹

"Siegfrieds Tod," I. Frigga. For the name of the old nurse and priestess, Frigga, Hebbel has used a combination of the names Frigg, the wife of Odin, and Freyja, daughter of Njord and sister of Freyr. The myths concerning Freyja are in many cases mingled with those concerning Frigg. Grimm calls attention to the fact that the various forms and even meanings of the two names very often approach each other, and cites examples from Paulus Diaconus, Saxo Grammaticus, etc., which practically show interchangeability of the two names.²

672-674. Frigga.

Ich habe

Den alten Göttern, eh der Mond zerbrach,
Ein Opfer dargebracht.

780.

So opfre Kind.

With the old Germani, the moon had decided influence upon important undertakings, which were only begun when the moon's light was favorable. Tacitus says that the Germani held their assemblies at new or full moon, but does not say whether the period was favorable for all enterprises. Weinhold knows of three great sacrifices held yearly, in summer, in the autumn, and in midwinter.³

687. Frigga.

Ein Greis.

693-696.

Sein Haar war weiss wie Schnee,
Und länger, als ich's je bei einem Weibe

¹ Fm. 42 (J7, Bugge 42), cf. also Vs. 20; Sd. intr. prose (J Fm. prose after 9).

² Grimm, 278 f.; Gering, 18 f.

³ Grimm, 671 ff.; Weinhold, 77.

Gesehen habe, wie ein weiter Mantel
Umwallt' es ihn, und hinten schleppt' es nach.

In Harbarðsljóð, Odin appears under the name of Harbarð, "grey-beard." The descriptions of Odin in the Norse sources usually make him old and one-eyed, enveloped in a huge blue mantle, with a broad hat pulled low over his brow.¹

713-715. Frigga.

Sie war
An der Geburt gestorben und mit ihr
Zugleich die Frucht.

718-721.

Viele Jahre hatte
Er sich umsonst dies holde Glück gewünscht,
Und einen Monat früher, als es kam,
Ereilte ihn ein jäher Tod.

The Volsungasaga gives an account of the births of Volsung and Sigurd. Reri and his wife desire for many years a child; finally Frigg and Odin intervene and send a wish-maiden with an apple. Reri becomes ill and dies while on a military expedition, and after six years the child Volsung is cut from his mother, who thus dies in giving him birth.² Sigurd likewise is born after his father's death on the field of battle.³

Norns and Valkyries.

751 f. Frigga.

Und unter Nornen und Valkyrien
Such' Dir die Mutter, wenn Du eine hast.

Hebbel's use of the Norns and Valkyries is interesting as typifying his attitude towards his Norse sources. It has been seen that his picture of Norn and Valkyrie involuntarily mingled, without any definite knowledge on his part of a justification for such treatment. He was the creator, far more than the investigator. In the above lines, Frigga voices the Norse conception of Brunhild by declaring her probable descent from Norns and Valkyries, and Hagen, urging upon Siegfried a second conquest, says:

1341-1344.

Die stolze Erbin der Valkyrien

¹ Cf. Vs. 3, 11; Grimm, 133.

² Vs. 1 and 2.

³ Sf.; Vs. 11-13.

Und Nornen liegt im Sterben, tödt sie ganz
 Dann lacht ein munt'res Weib uns morgen an,
 Das höchstens spricht: ich habe schwer geträumt!

Brunhild's references to her horse may also be a suggestion of the Valkyrie: —

884 f.

Muthig tummle
 Ich meinen Rappen, fröhlich trägt er mich.

887 f.

Schaudernd reiss ich
 Das Ross herum.

The Edda makes frequent references to Brynhild, as a Valkyrie, and to the Valkyries as riding: —

Sie sah Walküren
 Weither kommen,
 Bereit zu reiten
 Zum Rath der Götter.¹

Fafnesmól calls Brynhild *die Streiterjahrene* (Norse, *folk-vitr*, i.e., *fight-maiden, Valkyrie*).² Sigdrifomól says: Sie nannte sich Sigdrifa und war Walküre.³

It is particularly in Brunhild's vision where Norn and Valkyrie join. Brunhild suddenly realizes her supernatural significance, and pictures it in visionary form.⁴ On this subject, Grimm says, referring to the fact that Skuld occurs as a name for a Norn and for a Valkyrie: "from this appears the community between Norns and Valkyries, but also their dissimilarity. A *dis* can be both, Norn and Valkyrie, the functions are separate, generally the persons as well."⁵

897. Frigga.

Nun sieht sie selbst, was ihr die Norne spinnt!

The Eddic songs picture the Norns as twisting and fastening the cord, while they determine for each man his lot and the length of his life. Often their decree is whimsical, depending upon the state of their feelings.⁶ Their occupation is *orlog drýgja*: —

¹ Vsp. 24 (J17).

⁴ 908 ff., 1715-1719; cf. Vsp. and Njáls. c. 157.

² Fm. 43 (J8, Bugge 43).

⁵ Grimm, 393.

³ Sd. prose between 4 and 5 (J3 and 11).

⁶ *Ibid.* 379 ff.

Durch Myrkwidr flogen
 Mädchen von Süden,
 Ahlwit die junge,
 Urlog (*Schicksal, Kampf*) zu entscheiden
 Sie sassen am Strande
 Der See und ruhten,
 Schönes Linnen spannen,
 Die südlichen Frauen.¹

The visit of the Norns at Helgi's birth is thus described:—

Sie schnürten mit Kraft
 Die Schicksalsfäden
 Dass die Burgen brachen
 In Bralundr.
 Goldene Fäden
 Fügten sie weit.
 Sie mitten festigend
 Unterm Mondessaal.²

Inmittelst giengen
 Grimme Nornen.

Brynhild.

“Langes Leid
 Schuf uns leide Norne!”³

3575-3578. Dietrich.

Du siehst ein Bild und weisst es nicht zu deuten,
 Und erst, wenn was geschieht, besinnst Du Dich,
 Dass Dir's die Norne schon vor Jahr und Tag
 In Schattentänzen vorgegaukelt hat!

This reference to the shadow dances of the Norns is a picturesque invention, or is a symbolic way of implying that early warnings are only realized and heeded when it is too late. Gunther, in his determination to face whatever awaits him, once they have started on their way to the Huns, knows no stronger expression for his firmness than to say:—

3788-3790.

Ja, wenn die Norne selbst
 Mit aufgehob'nem Finger mich bedräute,
 Ich wiche keinen Schritt zurück!

¹ Vkv. 1.

² H. H. I. 2 ff. (J3).

³ Sg. 5, 7; cf. also Fm. 44, Gbr. II. 36 (J39); Fm. 11, Simrock translates wrongly; Gering has: Am Vorberg schon wird dich fällen die Norne.

2027-2029. Kriemhild.

Ich fürchte die Valkyrien! Man sagt,
Dass sie sich stets die besten Helden wählen,
Und zielen die, so trifft ein blinder Schutz.

This is a somewhat forced reference to Valkyries, but strictly true to Norse mythology. The function of the Valkyrie in battle is not merely to receive the souls of dead heroes, and bear them to Valhalla, but to determine the victory as well. They ride to battle to carry out Odin's behests, and it was because of particular disobedience in not granting the victory as Odin had commanded, that Brynhild's long sleep was imposed upon her.¹ Odin warns Sigurd: —

“Trugdisen stehn dir
Zu beiden Seiten
Und wollen dich verwunden.”²

776. Fafners. . . . Hort.

This is the only mention of the name of Fafnir, who, according to Norse versions, was the sole possessor of the hoard. Hebel attempts to reconcile the various accounts of the history of the treasure by making Siegfried win from Niblung's sons the hoard which is guarded by the dragon.³

778-780. Frigga.

ich weiss es lange,
Dass Deiner in der Stunde der Entscheidung
Die Offenbarung harrt.

918-920. Brunhild.

denn mein Auge
Durchdringt die Zukunft, und in Händen halt' ich
Den Schlüssel zu den Schätzen dieser Welt.

As Frigga had learned from the tablet, Brunhild is endowed with prophetic powers at the hour of final decision, and Brunhild, in the course of her vision, speaks of fate as having consecrated her to be its high priestess.

In the Edda and Volsungasaga, Brynhild has the gift of

¹ Cf. Grimm, 292 f. This office of the Valkyrie is seen Vsp. 24 (J17); Sd. prose between 2 and 3 (J3 and 11); Sg. 38; Od. 15; Gl. c. 36.

² Rm. 24 (J A15).

³ 570-591; cf. Rm. prose between 9 and 10, 13 and 14 (J prose 4 and 7); Vs. 19.

prophecy. In Sigurparkviða en Skamma, the revelation also comes at a fateful time, just before her death.¹ Between stanzas 21 and 22, several strophes have doubtless been lost, in which Brynhild tells Sigurd that evil will arise from their union.

880-883. Brunhild.

statt . . .
 . . . die eingefror'ne
 Seeschlange zu erlösen aus der Haft,
 Damit sie den Planeten nicht zerpeitsche.

This is doubtless an obscure reference to the Midgard serpent, which, according to the Edda, is the offspring of Loki and Angurboda, a giantess, by whom he also begot the Fenriswolf and Hel. Odin cast the serpent into the sea, where it surrounds all lands, and lies with its tail in its mouth until the Ragnarök, when Thor slays it.²

944. Giselher.

Als kämen Mensch und Zwerg and Alf zugleich.

Hebbel has employed the Norse word *Alf* instead of the German *Elbe*. Elves and dwarfs are, in Germanic mythology, supernatural beings of lower rank. The poet has probably used this phrase in much the same way as the Edda employs the words *aesir ok áljar*, to express a concept of higher beings.³

1275-1284. Truchs.

Auch führen diese Nibelungen-Recken
 Gar wunderliche Reden.

Wulf.

Von dem Raben!
 Was war es doch? Ich hab's nur halb gehört.

Truchs.

Ein Rabe hat sich auf das Gold gesetzt,
 Als man's zum Schiff hinunter trug, und so
 Gekrächzt, dass Siegfried, weil er ihn verstand,
 Sich erst die Ohren zugehalten und

¹ 51 ff. (J53 ff.); cf. Sd. 20 f. (J5).

² Cf. Vsp. 50, 56, 59 (J34, 39, 43); Hym. 22-24 (J21-23); Gl. c. 34, 47 f., 51; and cf. Bw. I. 130, "eine Midgardschlange, die sich in den Schwanz beißt und nicht mehr zu kauen, nur wiederzukauen braucht!" Referred to again, Tgb. II. 3265.

³ Cf. Vsp. 53 (J unnumbered, Bugge 48).

Gepiffen, dann nach ihm mit Edelsteinen
Geworfen, und zuletzt, weil er nicht wich,
Sogar den Speer geschleudert haben soll!

2326-2333. Siegfried.

Verfluchte Raben,

Auch hier? . . .

Mit jeglichem Gethiere warf ich schon
Nach diesem Schwarm, zuletzt mit einem Fuchs,
Allein sie weichen nicht und dennoch ist
Mir Nichts im frischen Grün so widerwärtig,
Als solch ein Schwarz, das an den Teufel mahnt.
Dass sich die Tauben nie so um mich sammeln!

2945-2947. Hagen.

Die Raben kreisen warnend um ihn her,
Er aber denkt: Ich bin bei meinem Schwäher,
Und wirft sie mit dem Fuchs und jagt sie fort!

The ascription of prophetic gifts to birds is frequently found in the Eddas.¹ In Brot af Sigurðarkviðu, a raven foretells the Burgundian downfall:—

Gesunken war Sigurd
Südlich am Rhein,
Von hoher Heister
Schrie heiser ein Rabe
"In Euch wird Atli
Die Schwertecken röthen
Eure Eide
Überwinden Euch, Mörder!"²

In Germanic folk-lore, the devil frequently assumes the form of a raven, while the dove is often spoken of as its antithesis. The connection of the raven with the devil may be due not merely to its blackness, cunning, and swiftness, but also as in the case of the wolf, to its connection with Odin. In the references to Siegfried's understanding of the language of the birds, Hebbel adds the popular superstition which makes ravens birds of ill-omen and opposed to the dove who brings good fortune. Probably Hebbel means to indicate the supernatural qualities of Siegfried by having the birds of Odin accompany him. Two ravens, Huginn and Muninn, are ascribed to

¹ H. H. I. 1, 5, 6; Fm. 32-38, 40-44 (J1 ff., Bugge 32 ff.); Brs. 5, and according to 13, a stanza after 5 in which an eagle prophesied (J9). ² Brs. 5.

Odin, who sit upon his shoulder and tell him everything which they see and hear.¹

2280-2282. Kriemhild.

Ihr Vögel, die ihr mich umkreist,
Ihr weissen Tauben, die ihr mich begleitet,
Erbarmt Euch meiner, warnt ihn, eilt ihm nach!

At Brunhild's reception at Worms, Ute attributes the harshness of her nature to her life and environments, and typifies this attitude by saying:—

1176-1179.

Bei dem Geschrei der Krähen
Und Raben, das sie hörte, konnte sich
Ihr Herz nicht öffnen, doch es wird gescheh'n
Bei Lerchenruf und Nachtigallenschlag.

1833-1835. Siegfried.

Ein Rabe hätt' ihm dann
Die Augen ausgehackt und sie verächtlich
Vor seinen Herren wieder ausgespie'n.

This expression of anger, when Siegfried hears of the supposed treachery of the Danes and Saxons, recalls the Eddic figure:—

Das gäbe dir, Gudrun,
Erst Grund zu weinen,
Wenn Mir auch die Raben
Das Herz zerreißen.²

1536-1545. Brunhild.

Wenn er dabei so hoch an Haupt und Gliedern
Hervorragt vor den Andern, dass man glaubt,
Er sammle sich von allen Königen
Der Welt die Kronen ein, um eine einz'ge
Daraus zu schmieden und die Majestät
Zum ersten Mal im vollen Glanz zu zeigen,
Denn, das ist wahr, so lange auf der Erde
Noch mehr als eine glänzt, ist keine rund,
Und statt des Sonnenrings trägst auch Du
Nur einen blassen Halbmond auf der Stirn!

1570 f. Brunhild.

Du bist
Der Stärkste auf der Welt, d'rum peitsche ihn.

Brunhild's expressed motives for urging Gunther to humiliate

¹ Grm. 20 (J10); Gl. c. 38; Grimm, 134.

² Gþr. II. 10.

Siegfried may have some connection with Brynhild's taunting remarks after the murder, in the Edda, and to her speech inciting Gunnar to the deed:—

“Nun werdet ihr walten
Des Landes und der Waffen:
Die hätte der Hunische (*wrong for Sigurd*)
Beherrscht allein,
Liesst ihr das Leben
Ihn länger behalten.¹

“Lang mögt ihr der Lande,
Der Leute geniessen,
Da ihr den Kühnen
König fället.”²

Sie mahnte die Männer
Zum Mord im Zorn
Ganz und gar
Sollst du, Gunnar, entsagen
Mir zumal
Und meinen Landen.
Nicht froh hinfort,
Werd ich, Fürst, bei dir.

So du nicht sterben
Lassest den Sigurd
Und vielen Fürsten
Furchtbar gebietest.³

2571. Kriemhild.

Geh' nur hinüber zu Brunhild
Sie isst und trinkt und lacht.

This is a direct borrowing from the Edda:—

Da lachte Brynhild
Die Burg erscholl.²

Da lachte Brynhild,
Budlis Tochter,
Heute noch einmal
Aus ganzem Herzen
Da bis an ihr Bette
Durchbrach den Raum

¹ Brs. 8 (J12).

² Brs. 10 (J14).

³ Sg. 9 f. (J10 f.).

Der gellende Schrei
Der Giukis Tochter.¹

2800-2807. Gunther (of Brunhild after Siegfried's death)
sie fluchte uns
Noch grauenvoller, als Kriemhild uns fluchte,
Und loderte in Flammen auf, wie nie,
Seit sie im Kampf erlag.

Hagen.

Sie brauchte Zeit,
Um sich hinein zu finden.

Gunther.

Als ich sie
Nun mahnte, dass sie selbst es ja geboten,
Goss sie den Wein mir in's Gesicht und lachte,
Wie ich die Menschheit noch nicht lachen hörte.

The Edda has: —

Wie sie mit Weinen
Nun sprach von dem Werk
Zu dem sie lachend
Die Helden lud.²

Anhub da Gunnar,
Der Habichte Fürst:
"Schlag kein Gelächter aus,
Schadenfrohe,
Heiter, in der Halle
Als brächt es dir Heil.
Wie hast du die lautere
Farbe verloren,
Verderbenstifterin,
Die selbst wohl verdirbt."³

3162-3168. Kriemhild.

Der Rabe, der im Wald
Den öden Platz umflattert, wo's geschah,
Hört nimmer auf zu kreisen und zu krächzen,
Bis er den Rächer aus dem Schlaf geweckt.
Wenn er das Blut der Unschuld fließen sah,
So findet er die Ruh' nicht eher wieder,
Bis das des Mörders auch geflossen ist.

This is possibly a reminder of Hagen's words in the Edda: —

Siehe den Sigurd,
Dort gegen Süden,

¹ Sg. 30.

² Brs. 19.

³ Sg. 31; cf. also Vs. 30, 31.

Höre die Krähen,
 Und Raben krächzen,
 Falken froh
 Die Flügel schlagen
 Und Wölfe heulen
 Um deinen Helden.¹

Lines 3164-3166 are doubtless an invented enlargement upon mythology and popular superstition.

3356. Volker (of Werbel and Swemmel)
 Die reden falsch! Das ist gewiss!
 4221. Volker (of Werbel)
 O, der ist falsch, wie's erste Eis!

The entire first part of "Kriemhilds Rache," Act I., scene i., teems with hints that the Hunnish messengers are treacherous.²

In the Nibelungenlied, no guilt attaches to them; in the Edda and Volsungasaga, on the other hand, Vingi or Knefröd falsifies the message.

Das Gesinde trank,
 Noch schwiegen die Listigen,
 In der Halle den Wein
 In Furcht vor den Hunnen.
 Da kundete Knefröd
 Mit kalter Stimme,
 Der südliche Gesandte,
 Vom hohen Sitze.³

Er sandte schnelle Boten,
 Dass seine Schwäger kamen.

Da ritzte sie Runen;
 Doch vor der Reise
 Verfälschte sie Wingi,
 Der Bringer der Fahr.

Nicht Einem ahnte Trug
 Ob ihrer Ankunft.

Högnis Hausfrau
 Kostbera hört es,
 Da gieng die kluge
 Und grüßte die Boten.⁴

¹ Gþr. II. 8.

² Cf. 3311-3355.

³ Akv. 2.

⁴ Am. 2-6.

3571-3573. Dietrich.

Ich sass einst eine Nacht am Nixenbrunnen
Und wusste selbst nicht, wo ich war. Da hab' ich
Gar viel erlauscht.

3768. Volker.

Und weise Nixen, die dem Zauberborn
Entstiegen —

4810. Dietrich.

Ich sitze wieder
Am Nixenbrunnen.

4827 f.

Vom Schöpfungsborn, und wie er kocht und quillt
Und überschäumt in Millionen Blasen.

The Hǫvumǫl says: —

Zeit ist's zu reden
Vom Rednerstuhl
An Urdas Brunnen
Sass ich und schwieg,
Sass ich und dachte
Und merkte der Männer Reden.¹

Urdas Brunnen is the spring of Urd, the chief of the Norns, at the foot of the ash Yggdrasil, where the gods assemble for their councils.

Gylfaginning 15: Da fragte Gangleri: Wo ist der Götter vornehmster und heiligster Aufenthalt? Har antwortete: Das ist bei der Esche Yggdrasills: da sollen die Götter täglich Gericht halten. . . . Bei der andern Wurzel . . . ist Mimirs Brunnen, worin Weisheit und Verstand verborgen sind. Der Eigner des Brunnens heisst Mimir und ist voller Weisheit, weil er täglich von dem Brunnen aus dem Giallarhorn trinkt.

3827 f. Kriemhild.

Und meine Mutter schickt mir diese Locke
Und fügte nicht ein einz'ges Wort hinzu?

In the Norse versions, Gudrun attempts to warn her brothers through the messenger in a similar manner: —

Gunnar to Hǫgni.

“Was rieth uns die Schwester,
Die den Ring uns sandte,
In Wolfskleid gewickelt?

¹ Hǫv. 111 (JIV. 1).

Mich dünkt sie warnt uns.
 Mit Wolfshaar gewahrt ich
 Den rothen Ring umwunden:
 Gefährlich ist die Fahrt,
 Die wir fahren sollen.”¹

In the *Drap Niflunga*, Gudrun sends warnings in runic words and to Hǫgni the ring *Andvaranaut* to which she attaches a wolf's hair. In *Atlamól*, the warning is simply through a message.² The *Volsungasaga* combines the warning of the runes and the wolf's hair.³

4139-4150. Rumolt.

Ich guckt' einmal in eine finst're Höhle
 Durch einen Felsenspalt hinein. Da glühten
 Wohl dreissig Augenräder mir entgegen,
 Grün, blau und feuergebl, aus allen Ecken
 Und Winkeln, wo die Thiere kauerten,
 Die Katzen und die Schlangen, die sie zwinkernd
 In ihren Kreisen drehten. Schauerlich
 Sah's aus, es kam mir vor, als hätt' sich eine
 Gestirnte Hölle tief im Mittelpunkt
 Der Erde aufgethan, wie all die Funken
 So durch einander tanzten, und ich fuhr
 Zurück, weil ich nicht wusste, was es war.

4153-4164. Dankwart.

An Schlangen

Und Katzen fehlt's gewiss nicht. Ob auch Löwen
 Darunter sind?

Rumolt.

Die Probe muss es lehren,
 In meiner Höhle fehlten sie. Ich suchte
 Den Eingang auf, sobald ich mich besann,
 Denn draussen war es hell, und schoss hinein.
 Auch traf gar mancher Pfeil, wie das Geächz
 Mir meldete, doch hört' ich kein Gebrüll
 Und kein Gebrumm, es war die Brut der Nacht,
 Die dort beisammen sass, die feige Schaar,
 Die kratzt und sticht, anstatt zu off'nem Kampf
 Mit Tatze, Klau' und Horn hervor zu springen.

This is possibly a reference to the Norse accounts of Gunnar's end:—

¹ Akv. 8.

² 9 ff. (J11 f.).

³ Vs. 33.

Den lebenden Fürsten
 Legte der Wächter Schaar
 In den tiefen Kerker
 Da krochen wimmelnd
 Scheusliche Schlangen.¹

4237-4240. Hagen.

Mein Freund, wir sind auf deinem Todtenschiff,
 Von allen zwei und dreissig Winden dient
 Uns keiner mehr, ringsum die wilde See,
 Und über uns die rothe Wetterwolke.

4284-4286.

Nein, das vom Todtenschiff!
 Das Letzte, wie der Freund den Freund ersticht,
 Und dann die Fackel — Das geht morgen los.

Hebbel probably thought here of the Norse death-ship, Naglfar, which the giants use in their last expedition against the gods. It is the largest of all ships, is made from the nails of dead men, and is owned by Muspell's sons; in the great Fimbulwinter, it is cast loose, with the giant Hrym as helmsman. After the gods have been vanquished, Surt casts fire over the earth which consumes the whole world.²

4575-4585. Dietrich.

Wie ihre wilden Väter sich
 Mit eig'ner Hand nach einem lust'gen Mahl
 Bei Sang und Klang im Kreise ihrer Gäste
 Durchbohrten, wenn des Lebens beste Zeit
 Vorüber schien, ja wie sie trunk'nen Muths
 Wohl gar ein Schiff bestiegen und sich schwuren,
 Nicht mehr zurückzukehren, sondern draussen
 Auf hoher See im Brudermörderkampf,
 Der Eine durch den Anderen, zu fallen,
 Und so das letzte Leiden der Natur
 Zu ihrer letzten höchsten That zu stempeln.

4829 f.

Von einem letzten Herbst,
 Der alle Formen der Natur zerbricht.

These are probably references to the Fimbulwinter which the *Völuspá* describes thus: —

¹ Akv. 31 (J unnumbered, Bugge 31); cf. Vs. 37.

² Vsp. 50; Gl. 43, 51.

Brüder befehden sich,
 Füllen einanders
 Geschwisterte sieht man
 Die Sippe brechen,
 Unerhörtes eräugnet sich,
 Grosses Unrecht.
 Der Eine schont
 Des Andern nicht mehr.¹

4320-4322. Volker.
 Die gier'gen Zwerge haben's gleich gehascht
 Und hüten's in der Teufe. Lasst es dort,
 So habt Ihr ew'gen Frieden!

4324-4326.
 Und zu dem Fluch, der in ihm selber liegt,
 Hat noch ein neuer sich hinzugesellt:
 Wer's je besitzt, muss sterben, eh's ihn freut.

4334-4336.
 So haben es die Zwerge
 In ihrer Wuth verhängt, als sie den Hort
 Verloren.

The original curse which was connected with the hoard is never mentioned in the *Nibelungenlied*, but only exemplified by the death of its possessors. Throughout Volker's vision, Hebel resorts to the Norse sources to give, in shadowy outlines, a history of the hoard and the calamity attaching to its possession.

"Da sagte der Zwerg, der Ring solle Jedem, der ihn besässe, das Leben kosten."²

"Loki sah all das Gold, das Andwari besass. Aber als dieser das Gold entrichtet hatte, hielt er einen Ring zurück. Loki nahm ihm auch den hinweg. Da gieng der Zwerg in den Stein und sprach: —

'Nun sollen das Gold
 Das Gustr hatte,
 Zweien Brüdern
 Und der Edeling
 Acht verderben:
 Mein Gold soll Keinem
 Zu Gute kommen.'"³

¹ Vsp. 46 (J 30), cf. also Gl. 51.

² Sk. 39.

³ Rm. 5 and preceding prose (JB. I.). Similarly Vs. 14, 18; cf. Nachl. II. 301, "Auf dem 'Theilen' liegt ein Fluch seit den Nibelungen; König Niflungs Söhne schlugen sich todt dabei und in der Bibel geht es nicht besser her."

4333. Volker.

Weil es die ganze Welt in Flammen setzen
Und Ragnaroke überdauern soll.

*Ragnarøk*r is the word used in the Edda to signify the downfall of the gods; *røk*r means darkness, gloom, *ragna* being the genitive plural of *regin*, in the sense of divinity, godhead.

ulſge. . . .
es i bændom skal
bíða ragnarøkrs,

the wolf which shall be in bonds until the *Ragnarök*.¹

4336-4341. Hagen.

Wie geschah's?

Volker.

Durch Götter-Raub!

Odin und Loke hatten aus Verseh'n
Ein Riesenkind erschlagen, und sie mussten
Sich lösen.

Hagen.

Gab's denn einen Zwang für sie?

Volker.

Sie trugen menschliche Gestalt und hatten
Im Menschenleibe auch nur Menschenkraft.

The introductory prose of the *Reginismöl* gives this account of the hoard: "Regin . . . tells Sigurd . . . of the adventure, how Odin, Hönir, and Loki had come to Andwarafors. In this waterfall was a multitude of fish. Otr, said Regin, was the name of our brother, who often swam in the fall in the form of an otter. He had taken a salmon and sat on the bank, and ate blinking. Loki threw a stone and killed him. The gods thought they had been very lucky, and took off the otter's skin. That same evening they sought shelter with Hreidmar and showed their booty. Then we seized them and laid upon them as a ransom to fill the otter's skin with gold and to cover it without with red gold."

The *Atlakviða* also shows its knowledge of the history of the hoard: "The Rhine shall ever rule over the heritage of the Niblungs, sprung from the gods."²

¹ Ls. 39; cf. Gl. 26, 34, 51; Sk. 50; cf. Haupt's Zs. 16, 146 ff.

² Akv. 27 (J25); cf. Sk. 39; Vs. 14.

4399-4401. Hagen.

Ja, er vermehrt sich selbst, es ist ein Ring
Dabei, der immer neues Gold erzeugt,
Wenn man — Doch nein! Noch nicht!

Skáldskaparmál 39. "Der Zwerg bat, ihm den Ring nicht abzunehmen, weil er mit dem Ringe, wenn er ihn behielte, sein Gold wieder vermehren könne."¹

4404 f. Hagen.

Es mangelt nur
Der Zauberstab, der Todte wecken kann!
Cf. also Ms. Th. 3532, Iring: Bei . . . Odin's Zauberstab.

Odin's power to wake the dead in order to demand from them knowledge of secret things is attested in the Eddic song, Baldrs-draumar, where Odin rides to the kingdom of Hel to discover why evils dreams disturb Baldr: —

Das Wecklied zu singen,
Begann er der Weisen,
Schüttelte Stäbe,
Nach Norden schauend,
Sprach die Beschwörung
Und heischte Bescheid
Bis gezwungen sie aufstand
Unheil verkündend.²

Thor makes it a reproach to Odin that he has learned his scathing insults from the dead: —

Thor
Woher hast du nur
Die Hohnreden all?
Ich hörte niemals
So höhnische.

Harbald
Ich lernte sie
Von den alten Leuten,
Die in den Wäldern wohnen.

Thor
Zu guten Namen
Giebst du den Gräbern,
Wenn du sie Wälder-
Wohnungen nennst.³

¹ Cf. Vs. 14.

² Bdr. 9 (J4).

³ Hrbl. 41-43 (J 26).

4943-4945. Hagen.

Ihr wisst, ich bin ein Elfenkind und habe
Davon die Todtenaugen, die so schrecken,
Doch auch das doppelte Gesicht.

In the *Nibelungenlied*, Hagen is represented as the son of Aldrian, but the conception of him as the son of an elf is so widespread that it is not certain whence Hebbel drew his knowledge. Of the older sources, the *Thidrekssaga* embodies this idea by making Hagen the son of the queen, Aldrian's wife, and an elf who overcame her while she was dazed with wine. Upon his second visit, he tells her of his act and bids her confide to her son his origin and tell him to call upon his father whenever he is in danger. Högni is described as being strong and sturdy and evil to deal with, in countenance like a ghost, and in face like unto his nature.¹ Hebbel describes him as pale, with hollow, deathlike, wolfish eyes, and possessed of a wisdom which sees pending evil.² The *Nibelungenlied* has reminiscences of this early conception of Hagen in his frightful appearance, which terrifies Gudrun.³

3. MINOR SOURCES

THE BIBLE

In a letter to Pastor L. W. Luck, in Wolfskehlen, January 21, 1861, Hebbel writes, "I have known the Bible which you exhort me to read, half by heart from my youth."⁴ An early passage in his journal bears testimony to the vivid impression made upon him as a child by the story of Christ's passion. "When I was a boy of nine or ten years, I read, for the first time, in an old, dilapidated New Testament (I believe that the dilapidated condition of the book had something to do with the impression) the story of the passion of Jesus Christ. I was most deeply moved, and my tears flowed freely. After that it was one of my stolen

¹ C. 169.

² 2675, 3594, 3458; cf. *Z. f. vgl. Lit. Neue Folge* XII. 193 ff.; Grimm, "Deutsche Heldensage," 180.

³ XXVII. 1604, XXVIII. 1672.

⁴ Nachl. II. 136; Tgb. IV. 5847.

pleasures to repeat this reading in the same book, at the same hour (towards twilight), and for a long time the impression remained similar to that first one. But one time, I noticed, to my horror, that my feelings remained comparatively calm, that my eyes did not fill with tears. This oppressed me like the greatest sin; it seemed to me as though my hard-heartedness were little less than the offence of that soldier who pierced the Saviour's side with his spear, so that water and blood flowed. I could not be comforted, I wept, but I wept over myself. But now, just as healthy nature always knows how to help itself, I ascribed my heart's hardness to the hour, I gave myself up to the hope that the old feelings would, at another hour, recur with their old force. I was, however, unconsciously wise enough not to put another of my hours to the test; I read the story no more." ¹

On the basis of these assertions, and in the light of the early influences which surrounded the poet, it is quite probable that Hebbel's use of the Bible as a source is often not conscious or studied, but rather a natural appropriation of Biblical figure and phraseology where the scene or the setting renders such language appropriate. Naturally, too, the instances in the "Nibelungen" where we can trace a Biblical analogy occur principally in the speeches of the Kaplan.

326. Ute.

Wir sehen oft im Traum den Finger Gottes.

2660. Kaplan.

Es ist der Finger Gottes.

2. Mos. 8. 19. Da sprachen die Zauberer zu Pharaon: Das ist Gottes Finger.

5. Mos. 9. 10. Und mir der Herr die zwei steinernen Tafeln gab, mit dem Finger Gottes geschrieben.

Dan. 5. 5. Eben zu derselben Stunde gingen hervor Finger, als einer Menschenhand, die schrieben gegen dem Leuchter über, auf die getünchte Wand, in dem königlichen Saal.

1002 f. Giseler.

So mag man sehen
Wie dieses Kind den Löwen führt!

¹ Tgb. I. 983; cf. S. T. IV viii., and V. ix.

Jes. 11. 6. Ein kleiner Knabe wird Kälber und junge Löwen und Mastvieh mit einander treiben.

1395 f. Kriemhild.

Du lobst den Herrn

In seiner Magd!

Luc. 1. 38. Maria aber sprach: Siehe ich bin des Herrn Magd.

1552 f. Brunhild (to Gunther).

zeige mir, wie herrlich Du erscheinst,
Wenn er der Schemel Deiner Füße ist.

Ps. 110. 1. "Setze dich zu meiner Rechten, bis ich deine Feinde zum Schemel deiner Füße lege."

Cf. also Matth. 22. 44; Marc. 12. 36; Luc. 20. 42 f.; Apost. 2. 34 f.; Ebr. 10, 13.

2090-2097. Kaplan.

Der heil'ge Stephanus

Sah, als das grimmentbrannte Volk der Juden
Ihn steinigte, des Paradieses Thore
Schon offen steh'n und jubelte und sang.
Sie warfen ihm den armen Leib zusammen,
Ihm aber war's, als rissen all' die Mörder,
Die ihn in blinder Wuth zu treffen dachten,
Nur Löcher in sein abgeworf'nes Kleid.

Apost. 7. 55-59.

55. Als er aber voll heiligen Geistes war, sahe er auf gen Himmel, und sahe die Herrlichkeit Gottes, und Jesum stehen zur Rechten Gottes, und sprach: Siehe, ich sehe den Himmel offen, und des Menschen Sohn zur Rechten Gottes stehen.
56. Sie schrieten aber laut, und hielten ihre Ohren zu, und stürmeten einmüthiglich zu ihm ein, stiessen ihm zur Stadt hinaus, und steinigten ihn.
57. Und die Zeugen legten ab ihre Kleider zu den Füßen eines Jünglings, der hiess Saulus.
58. Und steinigten Stephanum, der anrief und sprach: Herr Jesu, nimm meinen Geist auf!
59. Er knieete aber nieder, und schrie laut: Herr, behalte ihnen diese Sünde nicht! Und als er das gesagt, entschlief er.

2107-2109. Kaplan.

Auf uns'res Heilands ersten Wink das Schiff
Verliess, und festen Schritts die See betrat,
Die ihn bedrohte mit dem sich'ren Tod.

Matt. 14. 28, 29 (30, 31).

28. Petrus aber antwortete ihm, und sprach: Herr, bist Du es, so heiss mich zu dir kommen auf dem Wasser!

29. Und er sprach: Komm her! Und Petrus trat aus dem Schiff, und ging auf dem Wasser, dass er zu Jesu käme.

2122 f. Kaplan.

Herr, das Reich ist Dein!

Ute.

In Ewigkeit!

Chron. 30. 11. David. Dein ist das Reich.

Matth. 6. 13. dein ist das Reich . . . in Ewigkeit.

2135 f. Kaplan (speaking of the first messenger of God in his country).

Er ward verhöhnt, verspottet und zuletzt

Getödtet.

Matth. 20. 19. Christ (of himself).

Und werden ihn überantworten den Heiden zu verspotten
und zu geisseln und zu kreuzigen.

Cf. also Marc. 10. 34; Luc. 18. 32.

2140-2142. Kaplan.

Da hört ich sein Gebet.

Er betete für mich, und mit dem Amen

'Verhaucht' er seinen Geist.

This calls to mind the accounts of Christ's death given in the Gospels.

Luc. 23. 34. Jesus aber sprach: Vater, vergib ihnen, denn Sie wissen nicht, was sie thun.

Cf. also 2704. Kaplan.

Gedenke dessen, der am Kreuz vergab.

2145. Kaplan.

Und zog hinaus und predigte das Kreuz.

1. Cor. 1. 23. Wir aber predigen den gekreuzigten Christum, den Juden ein Ärgerniss und den Griechen eine Thorheit.

2192 f. Siegfried (of the Danes and Saxons).

Nun, die säen nicht

Und wollen dennoch ernten.

Luc. 19. 21 (in the parable of the talents).

du . . . erntest, das du nicht gesäet hast.

Cf. also Matth. 25. 24.

2613-2615. Kaplan.

Du suchst die Rache, doch die Rache hat

Der Herr sich vorbehalten, er allein

Schaut in's Verborg'ne, er allein vergilt!

5. Mos. 32. 35. Die Rache ist mein, ich will vergelten.

Röm. 12. 19. "Die Rache ist mein, Ich will vergelten, spricht der Herr."

Ps. 94. 1. Herr Gott, dess die Rache ist, Gott, dess die Rache ist,
erscheine!

Matth. 6. 6. dein Vater, der in das Verborgene siehet, wird dir's vergelten öffentlich.

Cf. also Jes. 34. 8; 35. 4; Jerem. 51. 6, 56.

2621-2623. Kaplan.

Ist's nicht genug, dass ihn sein Richter kennt?

Kriemhild.

Ich mögte dem Unschuldigen nicht fluchen.

Kaplan.

So fluche Keinem, und Du thust es nicht!

References to God as judge occur frequently.

Ps. 58. 12. Der Gerechte wird seiner ja geniessen; Es ist ja noch Gott Richter auf Erden.

Röm. 12. 14. Segnet, die euch verfolgen; segnet und fluchet nicht.

2624 f. Kaplan.

Du armes Menschenkind, aus Staub und Asche

Geschaffen und vom nächsten Wind zerblasen.

1. Mos. 18. 27. Abraham antwortete und sprach: Ach siehe, ich habe mich unterwunden zu reden mit dem Herrn, wiewohl ich Erde und Asche bin.

Hiob. 30. 19. Man hat mich in Dreck getreten, und gleich geachtet dem Staub und Asche.

34. 15. Alles Fleisch würde mit einander vergehen, und der Mensch würde wieder zu Asche werden.

Pred. 3. 20. Es fährt Alles an Einen Ort; es ist Alles von Staub gemacht, und wird wieder zu Staub.

Cf. also 1. Mos. 2. 7, 3. 19; Pred. 12. 7.

Menschenkind as an appellation for man is a frequent Biblical term.

2 Chron. 6. 30; Hiob. 25. 6; Ps. 11. 4., etc.

Hiob. 7. 7. Gedenke, dass mein Leben ein Wind ist.

Cf. Ps. 78. 39.

2626. Kaplan.

Wohl trägst Du schwer und magst zum Himmel schrei'n.

References to crying out to God are found.

Hab. 1. 2; Jer. 11. 14; Ps. 30. 3; 2. Sam. 22. 7., etc.

2627-2630. Kaplan.

Doch schau' auf Den, der noch viel schwerer trug!

In Knechts-Gestalt zu uns herabgestiegen,

Hat er die Schuld der Welt auf sich genommen,

Und büssend alle Schmerzen durchempfunden.

Jes. 53. 4. Fürwahr, Er trug unsere Krankheit, und lud auf sich unsere Schmerzen.

Cf. Matth. 8. 17.

Joh. 1. 29. Siehe, das ist Gottes Lamm, welches der Welt Sünde trägt.

1. Pet. 2. 24. Welcher unsere Sünden selbst geopfert hat an seinem Leibe auf dem Holz.

Phil. 2. 7. Sondern äusserte sich selbst, und nahm Knechtsgestalt an, ward gleich wie ein anderer Mensch und an Geberden als ein Mensch erfunden.

Cf. Jes. 42. 1.

2634. Kaplan.

Die Kraft des Himmels sass auf seinen Lippen.

Die Kraft Gottes is mentioned Röm. 1. 16; Cor. 1. 18, etc.

2636 f. Kaplan.

Er aber war gehorsam bis zum Tode,
Er war gehorsam bis zum Tod am Kreuz.

5456. Dietrich.

Im Namen dessen, der am Kreuz erblich!

Cf. Tgb. IV. 5540. Wien, den 1. Januar 1857. Schellings Vorlesung über das Wort: Er war gehorsam bis zum Tode am Kreuz. Der Philosoph deducirte, dass Christus auch vom Vater hätte abfallen können und verlegte damit den Teufel unmittelbar in Gott hinein. Seine Eröffnungsrede: "Ich hoffe, dass kein Schurk unter uns ist."

Cf. "Genoveva," III. v. 1197 f.

Die Seele kreuziget sich selbst,
Wenn sie der Kreuzigung des Herrn gedenkt.

Phil. 2. 8. Er niedrigte sich selbst, und ward gehorsam bis zum Tode, ja zum Tode am Kreuz.

Cf. also Ebr. 12. 2.

2662. Kaplan.

ein Kainszeichen.

Cf. 1. Mos. 4. 15. Und der Herr machte ein Zeichen an Kain, dass ihn Niemand erschlüge, wer ihn fände.

Ms. M. 2704. Kaplan.

Gedenk' der ewigen Barmherzigkeit!

Klagl. 3. 22. seine Barmherzigkeit hat noch kein Ende.

2835 f. Gunther.

doch heute hast
Du selbst das Licht ja auf den Tisch gestellt.

This is possibly an obscure reference to Matth. 5. 15.

Man zündet auch nicht ein Licht an, und setzt es unter

einen Scheffel; sondern auf einen Leuchter, so leuchtet es denen allen, die im Hause sind.

Marc. 4. 21. Zündet man auch ein Licht an, dass man es unter einen Scheffel oder unter einen Tisch setze? Mit nichten, sondern dass man es auf einen Leuchter setze.

2990-2992. Kriemhild.

Auch kann sie mit der Zunge, die sie braucht,
Um ihren Feind zu tödten, ihm nicht schwören,
Dass sie ihn küssen will.

4490. Hagen.

Dann küsse Deinen Feind, wenn Du's vermagst.

4551-4553. Etzel.

Ich hörte ja von Dir,
Dass Eure Weise sei, den Feind zu lieben
Und mit dem Kuss zu danken für den Schlag.

Matth. 5. 39. Ich aber sage Euch, dass ihr nicht widerstreben sollt dem Uebel; sondern so dir Jemand einen Streich gibt auf deinen rechten Backen, dem biete den andern auch dar.

5. 44. Ich aber sage Euch: Liebet eure Feinde, segnet, die Euch fluchen, thut wohl denen, die Euch hassen, bittet für die, so euch beleidigen und verfolgen.

Cf. also Luc. 6. 27 f. and 35.

Luc. 6. 29. Und wer dich schlägt auf einen Backen, den biete dem Andern auch da.

3166. Kriemhild.

Blut der Unschuld.

The Bible has various references to *Unschuldig Blut*. Cf. 5. Mos. 19. 13, 21. 8, 9, 27. 25; 1. Sam. 19. 5; Ps. 94. 21; Matth. 27. 4.

3753. Rüdiger, referring to his courtship, says: —
Ich harrete sieben Jahr.

This may be an obscure reference to Jacob's wooing of Rachel. Cf. 1. Mos. 29. 18-28.

1. Mos. 29. 20. Also dienete Jakob um Rahel sieben Jahre.
Cf. "Maria Magdalena," I. v. Leonhard.

Jacob liebte die Rahel und warb sieben Jahre um sie.
"Herodes und Mariamne," II. vi. Salome.

Dein armes Weib

Um das Du warbst, wie Jacob warb um Rahel.

3898 f. Etzel.

Wenn Du mein halbes Reich verschwenden willst,
So steht's Dir frei.

Marc. 6. 23. Und schwur ihr einen Eid: was du wirst von mir bitten,
will ich dir geben, bis an die Hälfte meines Königreichs.
3965-3967. Etzel.

Kriecht doch Mancher
Von Euch in Höhlen und verhungert da,
Wenn ihm kein Rabe Speise bringt.

This is a reference to the account of Elijah given in 1. Kings
17. Verse 6 contains the words: —

Und die Raben brachten ihm Brod und Fleisch des Morgens und des
Abends.

5412. Hildebrand.

Dem Herrn sei Preis und Dank!

Ps. 118. 28. Du bist mein Gott, und ich danke dir; mein Gott, ich will
dich preisen.

HISTORY AND FOLK-LORE

It is chiefly in connection with Etzel and his Huns that Hebbel makes the appeal to historical sources which he mentions in his Foreword. In the case of folk-lore it is sometimes difficult to tell just where his source ceases and his invention begins, for Hebbel frequently lets his ready fancy lead him into somewhat bizarre inventions, to supplement or enlarge upon the mystical element offered by his subject.¹ In giving to Etzel and his people a deeper significance than they are accorded in the epic, Hebbel materially expands his accounts of them from historical and popular sources.

3279-3286. Kriemhild.

Herr Etzel ist auch in Burgund bekannt,
Wer seinen Namen hört, der denkt zuerst
An Blut und Feuer, dann an einen Menschen! —
Ja wohl, Du hast mein Wort! — Man sagt: die Krone
Muss ihm um's Angesicht zusammen schmelzen,
Der glüh'nde Degen aus den Händen tröpfeln,

¹ The very few minor historical incidents which Hebbel employed are the ones which Professor Werner mentions in his notes, and which Hebbel set down in his journal. Cf. 1877-1879, Tgb. IV. 5485; 4000 f., Tgb. IV. 5516; 4880-4889, 4894-4900, Tgb. IV. 5438. The only one of any importance is the incident in Siegfried's burial which is fashioned after Dr. Frankl's narrative of the burial of the old Austrian emperors. Cf. 2602-2607, Tgb. IV. 5367.

3556-3559. Eh' er im Stürmen inne hält. Das ist
Der Mann dafür, dem wird es Wollust sein!
Rüdeger.

denn er ist
Uns gleich an Adel, doch wir hatten's leicht,
Wir erbten's mit dem Blut von unsern Müttern,
Er aber nahm es aus der eig'nen Brust!
4727-4758. Kriemhild.

Man hält Dich für den Brecher und Verächter
Von Brauch und Sitte, für den Hüter nicht,
Uns wundert sich noch immer, wenn ein Bote
Von Dir erscheint, dass er mit Dir gesprochen
Und doch nicht Arm und Bein verloren hat.

Etzel.

Man sieht mich, wie ich war, nicht wie ich bin! —
Ich ritt einmal das Ross, von dem Dir Nachts
In dem gekrümmten, funkelnden Kometen
Am Himmel jetzt der Schweif entgegen blitzt.
Im Sturme trug es mich dahin, ich blies
Die Throne um, zerschlug die Königreiche
Und nahm die Könige an Stricken mit.
So kam ich, Alles vor mir niederwerfend,
Und mit der Asche einer Welt bedeckt,
Nach Rom, wo Euer Hoherpriester thront.
Den hatt' ich bis zuletzt mir aufgespart,
Ich wollt ihn sammt der Schaar von Königen
In seinem eig'nen Tempel niederhauen,
Und durch dies Zorngericht, an allen Häuptern
Der Völker durch dieselbe Hand vollstreckt,
Zu zeigen, das ich Herr der Herren sei,
Und mit dem Blute mir die Stirn zu salben,
Wozu ein Jeder seinen Tropfen gab.

Kriemhild.

So hab' ich mir den Etzel stets gedacht,
Sonst hätt' Herr Rüdeger mich nicht geworben:
Was hat ihn denn verwandelt?

Etzel.

Ein Gesicht
Furchtbarer Art, das mich von Rom vertrieb.
Ich darf es Keinem sagen, doch es hat
Mich so getroffen, dass ich um den Segen
Des Greises flehte, welchem ich den Tod
Geschworen hatte, und mich glücklich pries,
Den Fuss zu küssen, der den Heil'gen trug.

History combines with tradition to make Attila one of the most feared and powerful figures of the early Christian era (b. ca. 406, d. 453). In 451 he crushingly defeated the Burgundians; in 452 he devastated northern Italy and was pushing toward Rome when Leo I., at the head of an embassy, arrested his march. One story tells that Peter and Paul appeared before Leo; another, that Peter stood at Leo's side with a threatening sword.

Tgb. IV. 5884. Wien, 1. März, 1861: (Aus August Ludwig von Schlözers Leben, von s. Sohn:) Schlözer bezeichnet Attila irgendwo als Ungeheuer, wilder Kalmyk. Sein Göttinger College Gatterer nimmt davon Gelegenheit, diesen Hunnen in einem seiner Handbücher als das Muster eines weisen, tapfern und edelen Regenten anzupreisen (p. 209).

4390-4395. Hagen (zu den Heunen).

Kriecht auf dem Bauch
Heran und klammert Euch an uns're Beine,
Wie Ihr's in Euren Schlachten machen sollt.
Wenn wir in's Stolpern und in's Straucheln kommen
Und durch den Purzelbaum zu Grunde geh'n,
Um Hülfe schrei'n wir nicht, das schwör' ich Euch.

4671. Volker.

Man sagt bei uns, der Heune wäscht sich nicht.

4868-4875. Hagen.

Ich hörte oft,
Der Heune haue vom lebend'gen Ochsen
Sich eine Keule ab und reite sich
Sie mürbe unter'm Sattel.

Etzel.

Das geschieht,
Wenn er zu Pferde sitzt, und wenn's an Zeit
Gebracht, ein lust'ges Feuer anzumachen.
Im Frieden sorgt auch er für seinen Gaumen
Und nicht bloss für den undankbaren Bauch.

Hebbel enlarges upon the historical accounts of the Huns, and the popular superstitions concerning them. The Roman historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, Book XXXI., tells of them that they live on roots of herbs, or on the half-raw flesh of any animal, which they merely warm rapidly by placing it between their own thighs and the backs of their horses; ¹ that they never

¹ Ut neque igni neque saporatis indigeant cibis sed radicibus herbarum agrestium et semicruda cuiusvis pecoris carne vescantur, quam inter femora sua equorum terga subsertam fotu calefaciunt brevi.

shelter themselves under roofed houses; and that they wear linen clothes or garments made from field-mice which they wear until they fall off of them; that they fight with javelins tipped with sharpened bones, but at close range with a sword; that often while their antagonists are warding off their blows they entangle them with twisted cords so that, with their hands thus fettered, they lose all power of riding or walking. In person, they are ugly, with round shoulders and scarred, beardless faces. They have no religion and lack all sense of moral obligation.

What Hebbel added from popular superstition is gathered from various sources and indeed is probably a reminiscence of the beliefs and stories imbibed in childhood. The use of folk-lore as a source has been partially indicated under the consideration of Norse borrowings, where it was shown that Hebbel in certain cases fashioned over or added to Norse mythology.

143 f.

das tückische Geschlecht der Zwerge,
Der rasch umklammernd quetschend Würgenden.

This is doubtless a reference to the Alp as causing nightmare, *Alpdruck*. These beings are variously represented, and especially torment people who are asleep on their backs, by casting themselves upon their bodies in such a way as to press chest and throat together, to that the victims can neither breathe nor cry out.¹

625 f., cf. page 63. In making the birds which circle about Siegfried crows, daws, and owls, Hebbel doubtless had in mind the popular superstitions which attach evil significance to these birds, especially in regions where the raven is not common. The hoot of the owl prophesies approaching death.²

689-691. Brunhild.

Manches hast Du schon im Schlaf
Verrathen, denn Du sprichst, wenn Dir der Mond
In's Antlitz scheint.

This is probably an enlargement upon the popular belief

¹ Meyer, 343; Wuttke, 272 ff.

² Wuttke, 123, 201 f.

that somnambulists walk at the time of the full moon. Cf. h in Ms. Th. 2823-2825, written on the margin: —

Gunther (referring to Brunhild since Siegfried's death).

Wie Eine, die der Mond vom Schlafen weckt
Und auf die Dächer schickt.

896-899. Brunhild.

Der Erdball wurde zum Kristall für mich,
Und was Gewölk mir schien, war das Geflecht
Der Gold- und Silberadern, die ihn leuchtend
Durchkreuzen bis zum Grund.

Tgb. I. 370. Somnambülen haben Sinn für den Geist der Steine und Metalle . . . (nach den Alten).

Tgb. IV. p. 430, Werner quotes from "Die Seherin von Prevost" from which Hebbel drew this material, "Del Rio erzählt, dass es in Spanien Menschen gebe, die man Zahuris nennt, welche unter der Erde verborgene Dinge, Wasser Erzadern und Leichname sehen."¹

923-929. Brunhild.

Es rollen
Jahrhunderte dahin, Jahrtausende,
Ich spür' es nicht! Doch endlich frag' ich mich:
Wo bleibt der Tod? Da geben meine Locken
Mir Antwort durch den Spiegel, sie sind schwarz
Und ungebleicht geblieben, und ich rufe:
Diess ist das Dritte, dass der Tod nicht kommt!

Bw. II. 14 f. to Franz von Dingelstedt, Sept. 2, 1857, speaking of his "Genoveva": "was nun die Margaretha anlangt, so habe ich auch sie, so gut es ging, auf's menschliche zurück geführt . . . sie . . . kann . . . sehr gut von einer jüngeren Schauspielerin gespielt werden, da sie eine Art von Dämon ist und alles Dämonische, wie das Feuer, verjüngt."

A striking characteristic of tales which are the outgrowth of folk-lore is the unheeded and unnoticed passing of long lapses of time.

1264-1270. Wulf.

Unholde, diese Zwerge! Hohl im Rücken!
Kehr' einen um, so liegt ein Backtrog da.

¹ Cf. also W. X. 205.

Truchs.

Sie hausen auch ja mit dem Wurmgeschlecht
Im Bauch der Erde und in Bergeshöhlen,
Und sind des Maulwurfs Vettern.

Wulf.

Aber Stark!

Truchs.

Und klug! Der braucht nach der Alraunenwurzel
Nicht mehr zu spä'h'n, der die zu Freunden hat.

This is probably an invented enlargement upon the mythology connected with dwarfs and the popular beliefs concerning them. They are ugly and hunchbacked; their smithy is in holes and mountains, and their home is in caverns and mountain caves; they have knowledge of the hidden means of healing in stones and plants, and the power of prophecy is sometimes ascribed to them. In the *Alvissmól*, *Alviss* tells of his own learning:—

Alle neun Himmel
Hab ich durchmessen
Und weiss von allen Wesen.¹

Alraunenwurzel is a very old name for a root to which magic powers were ascribed. The name is doubtless connected with Old High German *râna*, and was perhaps once an appellation for mythical beings. It grows only under the gallows of an innocent man, and must be taken from the ground in a particular manner. If properly cared for, the root brings money and good fortune, answers questions, and by its changing color prophesies coming events. Its possessor will have no enemies, cannot be poor, and will be blessed with children.²

“Agnes Bernauer” I. xii. Caspar. “Wie gern wär’ ich als Geselle in die weite Welt gegangen, ob ich das Einhornthier, den Vogel Phönix, die Menschen, die auf Bäumen wachsen, irgendwo zu sehen bekäme, oder gar in der Türkei, wo sie doch gewiss Viele unschuldig hängen, ein Alräunchen erwischte.”³

2238 f. Hagen.

Warte doch auf Deinen Flachs!
Du sollst im Mondschein mit den Druden spinnen.

¹ Alv. 9; cf. Grimm 416 ff.

² Grimm 1153 ff.; Simrock, “Deutsche Mythologie,” 460. ³ W. III. 148.

Drude is doubtless used here in the sense of a witch or sorceress. Her vocation of spinning is seen in "Dornröschen."

2733 f. Gunther.

Und die Johannis-Feuer vor der Zeit
Auf allen Bergen weit und breit entzünden.

3047. Gerenot.

Man spart ja schon auf das Johannis-Feuer.

These lines are embellishments which Hebbel added to his various references to the *Sonnenwende*. The frequent allusions to the *Sonnenwendefeste* in the Nibelungenlied show the heathen origin of the poem, for the summer and winter festivals of the solstice were the principal festivals of Germanic heathendom. From these celebrations, Christianity took Christmas (December 25), and Johanni (June 24), and celebrated them with other or the same forms. Thus, in southern Germany and the Tyrol, the original sacrificial fires in celebration of the summer solstice are retained as a part of the festivities, and are called *Johannisfeuer*.¹

3044-3046. Kriemhild.

Was ist denn für ein Tag,
Dass alle meine Sippen sich so sammeln?
Treibt Ihr den Tod aus?

Cf. Tgb. I. 921, München, 22. October, 1837: Die alten Städte treiben im Mai den Tod (d. h. das Bild des Todes) aus der Stadt. (Jean Paul, Vorsch. d. Aesth. 3 Thl.)

In eastern Germany, the driving out of death is accomplished by burning or casting into the water a dummy. This custom is similar to the old Germanic festivities connected with the driving out of winter.²

3249-3253. Kriemhild.

Wie, Rüdeger, Du wirbst um eine Wittwe
Und suchst sie in der Mördergrube auf?

Rüdeger.

Was sagst Du, Königin?

¹ Grimm, 582 ff., 683; Simrock, "Deutsche Mythologie," 588; cf. Tgb. III. 4948.

² For a description of the ceremonies, cf. Grimm, 722 ff.; Simrock, "Deutsche Mythologie," 32; Wuttke, 36.

Kriemhild.

Die Schwalben fliehen
 Von dannen, und die frommen Störche kehren
 In's hundertjäh'rge Nest nicht mehr zurück.

Hebbel here embellishes the popular superstitions regarding swallows and storks. Swallows are everywhere sacred birds and mean good fortune. The belief is widespread that the house in which they nest is blessed and protected from disaster, and in the Valley of the Upper Inn the legend is current that where swallows build their nests there is no discontent. The stork is also a sacred bird which must not be harmed; if well treated, it returns year after year to the same nest. As it was earlier a worshipped bird, it has become here and there, in childish belief, a worshipping bird, and the stretching of its long neck is regarded as an attitude of prayer; hence the appellation, *fromner Storch*. Both birds have prophetic qualities.¹

3405-3409. Volker.

So haben sie vom Schicksal Witterung,
 Nur reden sie nicht gern, denn jedes Wort
 Bezahlen sie mit einem Lebensjahr,
 Und uralt werden sie, wie Sonn' und Mond
 Am Himmel, doch unsterblich sind sie nicht.

3416-3420. Hagen.

Die Weiber abermals doch nun
 In scheusslicher Gestalt. Sie schnitten mir
 Gesichter, und in seltsam-schnalz'gem Ton,
 Als spräche, statt des Vogels, jetzt der Fisch,
 In dem ihr schlanker Leib sich end'gen soll.

Meerweiber are mentioned in the Nibelungenlied and in the Thidrekssaga, where Hagen kills them. Wittich's ancestress, Wachild, is a mermaid, and to her in every case is ascribed longer life than that of ordinary people, if she is not entirely immortal. To mermaids is regularly attributed the gift of prophecy. The conception in the Nibelungenlied and with Hebbel is that of swan-maidens, although Hebbel inclines to the popular idea of the mermaid in making them seem like fish when they give their evil prophecies. The idea of making

¹ Busch, 195 ff.; Wuttke, 119 ff.

them pay for each word with a year of life is undoubtedly an invention.¹

3471. Hagen.

Wer mich hinunter stösst, den reiss' ich nach.

4426-4429. Gleich auf das erste Meisterstück des Hirsches,

Dem Jäger zu entrinnen, folgt das zweite,

Ihn in's Verderben mit hinab zu zieh'n,

Und eins von Beidem glückt uns sicherlich!

5284-5288. Rüdiger.

So denkt des Hirsches, der in höchster Noth

Sich auch noch gegen seinen Jäger wendet,

Und ihm die einz'ge blut'ge Thräne zeigt,

Die er auf dieser Erde weinen darf,

Ob er vielleicht Erbarmen in ihm weckt.

Cf. Wilhelm Tell. I. iv. Melchthal.

Jedem Wesen ward

Ein Nothgewehr in der Verzweiflungsangst.

Es stellt sich der erschöpfte Hirsch und zeigt

Der Meute sein gefürchtetes Geweih,

Die Gemse reißt den Jäger in den Abgrund.

Popular superstition attributes to the stag the power of showing a tear to the hunter, as a last plea for mercy.²

4319. Volker.

Und suchen Wünschelruthen.

Wishing-rods are a relic of the oldest heathendom. They were usually cut in a peculiar manner from a hazel bush, and when the forked end was held in both hands, the rod showed, by a quick lowering of its other end, the place where treasures, precious metals, veins of ore, or spring-water were to be found. Hebbel calls woman the wishing-rod that shows to man the treasure of the earth;³ and faith the union of the wishing-rod which points out, and the magnet which attracts.⁴ In his journal for November 27th, 1838, Hebbel writes, "Whoever lacks the wishing-rod can very undisturbedly dream of treas-

¹ Cf. Grimm, "Deutsche Heldensage," 387 f.; Simrock, "Deutsche Mythologie," 212.

² Cf. Washington Irving's "Tour on the Prairies," and the poem of H. Tollens, "De Noord-Amerikaansche Jager": Hy zag een traan haar oog ontrollen.

³ Nachl. I. 44.

⁴ Tgb. I. 515.

ures.”¹ In the Nibelungenlied, the wishing-rod is only casually mentioned as belonging to the hoard:—

XIX. 186. 1160. 1-3. (1064)

Der Wunsch lag darunter, von Gold ein Rüttelein;
Wer das erkundet hatte, der mochte Meister sein
Wohl auf der ganzen Erde über jeden Mann.

5069-5072. Kriemhild.

O, zeigt mir nur mein Bild! Ich schaud're nicht
Davor zurück, denn jeder Zug verklagt
Die Basilisken dort nicht mich. Sie haben
Mir die Gedanken umgefärbt.

Demetrius IV. ii. 2541 f.

so hütet mich vor Spiegeln,
Sonst wird's mir, wie dem Basilisk, ergeh'n.

Tgb. I. 1209. Der Mensch ist der Basilisk, der stirbt wenn er sich selbst sieht.

The lines in Demetrius are more in accord with the popular belief regarding the basilisk. In Holstein, it comes from an egg laid by a twenty-year-old cock, and from its poisonous glance everything dies, and even stones burst apart. If a mirror is held before it, it dies.² Hebbel merely mentions two other fabulous animals, the *Einhorn* and the *Vogel Greif*.³

¹ Tgb. I. 1358.

² Busch, 245 f.

³ 3119-3121.

CHAPTER IV

RELATION TO PREDECESSORS AND CRITICS

I. RAUPACH

HEBBEL's letters and journals, as well as his critical essays for various newspapers and magazines, prove that he knew well three of the modern versions of the Nibelungen saga, and their influence is shown more or less clearly in his trilogy. A fourth version, mentioned only after his manuscript of the "Nibelungen" was in the printer's hands, he yet doubtless knew prior to its completion. The three are Fouqué's "Der Held des Nordens," Raupach's "Der Nibelungen-Hort," and Geibel's "Brunhild;" the fourth is Wagner's "Der Ring des Nibelungen."

In order of importance as an actual source, as well as being probably the first modern version which came to his attention, Raupach's work has the principal place. It was a successful stage piece and is one of the few dramatic versions of the saga which have ever seen the footlights; but as a work of art it deserves the harsh criticism which Hebbel uttered against it. Yet with all its poverty of true dramatic feeling and wealth of theatrical makeshifts, it is not to be underestimated as an actual source of Hebbel's work.

Hebbel's final impulse to dramatic composition usually came from the outside; for example, he was inspired to write "Judith" by a picture in the Munich gallery,¹ and his inspiration for "Gyges" came through the suggestion of Braun von Braunthal that this story of Herodotus, which Hebbel had not hitherto known, would be suitable to his talents.² So, too, in the case of the "Nibelungen," the sight of Christine Eng-haus, who afterward became his wife, as Chriemhild in Rau-

¹ Bw. II. 189.

² *Ibid.* 187; Tgb. III. 5213.

pach's "Nibelungen-Hort," awakened the forms slumbering in his mind and kindled anew the desire to give them flesh and blood.

On the fourth of November, 1845, Hebbel arrived in Vienna poor and discouraged, after his sojourn in Italy;¹ his travelling stipend from the king of Denmark was spent, debt stared him in the face, and anxiety for the immediate future hung over him. After a fortnight of neglect, and a failure to gain a foothold, Hebbel was on the point of leaving Vienna when he was stopped by Zerboni di Sposetti, a young nobleman and an enthusiastic admirer of his "Judith," who insisted that he should remain, took him to his own hotel, and provided for his material wants.² A tide in Hebbel's affairs, a change in his whole outlook, date from this time. Through the Concordia, a literary club into which he was introduced, he met a Viennese poet, Otto Prechtler, and through him learned that Fräulein Enghaus, first actress at the Court Theatre, had long tried to bring his "Judith" on the stage. Prechtler presented Hebbel to the beautiful actress, and at the fourth meeting they became engaged.³

On the 11th of April, 1846, the poet wrote to Charlotte Rousseau, the sister of his student friend, of his engagement to Christine, and of her impersonation of Chriemhild in Raupach's play: "I myself have never experienced a more powerful impression in the theatre than from her Chriemhild in Raupach's Nibelungen-Hort, however miserable beyond compare the product is in itself."⁴ A week later, he wrote to Gurlitt, his artist friend in Rome, a similar expression of admiration for her wonderful performance.⁵ And in his journal for August 29th, 1847, evidently after his wife's impersonation of Chriemhild on that date, he wrote: "Tine as Chriemhild, a black flame! Great! Powerful!

"Black flame, flame of judgment! the red flame, to be sure, consumes too, but still it has the color of life, for blood is red, and from blood comes all life."⁶

¹ Tgb. III. 3746.

² Nachl. I. 186; Kuh II. 221 ff.

³ Nachl. I. 187, 419; Tgb. III. 3874.

⁴ Nachl. I. 187.

⁵ *Ibid.* 191.

⁶ Tgb. III. 4244 f.

In the autobiographical sketch which he sent to F. A. Brockhaus in Leipzig, September 15, 1852, Hebbel recalls the first performance with great vividness. "One evening, namely, when I went into the Court Theatre or rather, considering my aversion to the real stage with its repertoire, was dragged in, I saw Fräulein Christine Enghaus, as Chriemhilde in Ernst Raupach's *Nibelungen-Hort*. Never did I experience a similar impression, and yet I had seen much, and among others, very often the actress Rachel. This growing of the demon in the maiden, who is at the beginning so tender, so lily-like, so timid, this gradual rise to sudden action (*Aufzucken*), this final fearful bursting forth of a whole hell in the oath of vengeance: it was one of the highest conceivable pictures of the actor's art, and was received by the public with the greatest applause, which often lasted five minutes."¹

In 1853, in his article on the week in the theatre, which was published anonymously in *Der Wanderer*, Vienna, January 26th, he referred to his wife's performance in the "*Nibelungen-Hort*" as follows: "Chriemhilde is the most famous rôle of Frau Hebbel, nor is it indeed possible to depict with more agitating truthfulness, and yet without overstepping the boundary of the beautiful, the transition from the timid, modest maiden, who hides shamefaced from the secretly beloved one, to that fearful demon of vengeance who cuts off the head of her own brother like a thistle-top. What a contrast between the wheedling speech, 'Du wirst mir sagen, wess der Gürtel ist?' with which she entices from Siegfried his secret, and the horrible oath of vengeance which penetrates marrow and bone, in the fourth act, and how is it depicted!"² When, in March 1861, he was arranging with Dingelstedt for the performance of the third part of his trilogy, with his wife as Chriemhild, Hebbel wrote, "In the tragic-demonic she has not her equal, and her Chriemhild in Raupach's *Nibelungen-Hort* was the very bolt that struck me fifteen years ago, and held me fast in Vienna."³ In his dedication to the trilogy, Hebbel sets the

¹ Nachl. I. 418 f.

² W. XII. 20 f.

³ Bw. II. 71. For further references to Chriemhild as a leading rôle in his wife's repertoire, cf. Bw. II. 298 and Nachl. I. 133, II. 10.

final seal upon his acknowledgment of indebtedness to Christine's impersonation of Chriemhild.

From the time of Hebbel's arrival in Vienna to March 28th, 1857, the last time that it appeared in the Vienna repertoire, the "Nibelungen-Hort" was played thirteen times. All the references just given, as well as Hebbel's criticisms of the play, show that he was perfectly familiar with it, and that he saw it repeatedly both before and during his own long and interrupted period of composition.

When Hebbel came to Vienna, the popularity of Raupach's numerous dramas was still great enough to yield large profits to the prolific verse-maker and to cause Hebbel much anger and vexation. An autobiographical sketch which Hebbel doubtless wrote for Siegmund Engländer, and which the latter used in his anonymous characterization, says, "As yet, Genoveva has nowhere been presented because Raupach's play which just now is in the theatrical repertoire was in its way."¹

The "Nibelungen-Hort" appeared as manuscript for the stage in 1828, but was not published until 1834. It is a five-act drama with a prologue, including, with surprising brevity, the Nibelungen saga, as it is contained in the Nibelungenlied, and going beyond it for incidental inventions and for borrowings from the northern versions and from the Siegfriedslied.

The prologue is based chiefly on the Siegfriedslied. Chriemhild has already been carried off by the dragon who is soon to become a man and she his wife. King Eugel is given a more important rôle than in the Siegfriedslied, in that his prophecy is transformed into a warning against the evil which lies in the treasure. Siegfried's encounter with the dragon, Chriemhild's vow to serve him, her swooning through fear at his peril, all are features taken from the Siegfriedslied, while the story of the treasure, with its account of Hreidmar, Fafner, and Regen, the curse which rests upon the hoard, and the prophecy of short life for Siegfried, are taken from the Norse sources. For the first and only time in his play, Raupach has a glimmering

¹ *Sonntagsblätter* V., Vienna, Jan. 18, 1846. W. XII. 396. For further references to Raupach's "Genoveva," cf. Tgb. II. 2381; Bw. II. 60; Nachl. I. 422.

of the true significance of things in the account of how the dwarfs have first collected the treasure, and been robbed of it by the giants.

With the exception of Eugel, the names and the persons are from the Nibelungenlied. One of Raupach's methods for attaining dramatic brevity is to eliminate certain characters without transferring their rôles. Thus Ute is dead, and Gunther is Chriemhild's only brother. This elimination of characters prepares us for an equally whimsical disposition of material. The five acts of the play itself are based almost entirely on the Nibelungenlied. Raupach retains Chriemhild's dream of the falcon, as well as her two later dreams, Siegfried's invulnerability, the expedition to Iceland, the contests in the tarn-cap which here take place before Brunhild has seen Siegfried, the night struggle, the taking of the girdle, and the resulting quarrel. All of these contests Raupach explains as conditions laid down by Brunhild's mother so that the defiant maiden might not die childless. The war with the Danes is referred to, and, as in the Nibelungenlied, Hagen learns from Chriemhild the secret of Siegfried's vulnerable spot, and kills him at the spring. Hagen takes and sinks the treasure during Gunther's absence, Etzel woos and wins Chriemhild, and the immediate result is the downfall of the Burgundians, with Blödel, Dietrich, Rüdeger, Hawart, and Iring as new characters in the final catastrophe. These, and the facts that Brunhild and Chriemhild each have a son, are the principal features which Raupach has taken from the Nibelungenlied.

In humanizing Siegfried, Raupach has absolutely vulgarized him, and made of him a roisterous youth, who has found life too dull at home, who goes about seeking pastime, and who praises Chriemhild's lips as the prettiest he has ever kissed. He is asked to pilot the wooing expedition because they of the Netherlands know the sea. He joyfully proposes the second conquest of Brunhild:—

Haha! nun giebt es einen lust'gen Kampf
Mit einer schönen Maid bei dunkler Nacht.

* * * * *

Wohl trag' ich gross Verlangen nach dem Lohn,
Allein ich thät es auch der Kurzweil halben.

The quarrel scene is trivialized by basing its motivation in petty jealousies. Brunhild is less rich, for Chriemhild has the hoard, and therefore three hundred knights fought in the tourney in her colors and not one in Brunhild's; Brunhild is also the older and less beautiful of the two, and the feelings which induce her taunting words to Chriemhild are those of wounded personal vanity.

Yet although Raupach has maimed and dismembered the events of the Nibelungenlied to bring them into the compass of five acts which cover a period of only two years, he has found room for various inventions. In the prologue, we have Eugel's mysteriously foreboding admonitions, and Chriemhild's terror of the magic heathen gold. In the first act, we have Siegfried's long apostrophe to the *Wunderkappe*, Hagen's opposition to Siegfried's second offer of assistance, and Siegfried's breaking of his vow of silence; we have the girdle regarded and explained both by Brunhild and her women as an object for a fourth and final contest; and we have Brunhild's attempts to frighten Gunther from further wooing by declaring her lack of womanly qualities and her delight in mannish pursuits. The second act brings Brunhild's angry account of the tourney, and Gunther's wrath at her foolish feelings, as well as a scene in which Chriemhild forces from Siegfried the knowledge of the girdle. In the third act, Brunhild is a member of the chase, though Hagen is alone with Siegfried when he murders him. Gunther then leaves immediately for war, and Volker ends the act with a long eulogistic speech over Siegfried's body.

A further invention of Raupach is the family wrangling which occurs in the fourth act. Hagen has sent Chriemhild's son to Siegmund, but Brunhild's demands are that Chriemhild be sent, too, and that the stolen hoard be given to her. Each member of the Burgundian household has a quarrel with every other member. When Chriemhild learns of Etzel's wooing, she makes a direct appeal to Brunhild's womanhood and motherhood, and the scornful taunt with which Brunhild repulses her gives her the first idea of vengeance.

Etzel himself comes to Worms, prepared either for war or

for wedding, and he willingly accedes to Chriemhild's demands for retribution. Her condition is that she shall not be his wife until vengeance is wreaked on the Burgundians. In consequence, the wedding feast takes place on the banks of the Rhine, and here Raupach introduces the speeches over the wine and Volker's song of gloomy prophecy. Chriemhild's demands are vengeance on Hagen, the restoration of the hoard, and Brunhild in the dust at her feet. When the slaughter is complete, after Brunhild, rather than intrust her child's fate to such a fiend, jumps with him into the Rhine, Chriemhild wishes herself back with the dragon where she was good and pious:—

Jetzt bin ich böse wie die gift'ge Schlange,
Schwarz wie die Nacht, blutfarbig wie der Brand
Und hoffnungslos wie die Verdammniss.

But her remorse at her evil ways does not prevent her last deed of violence in stabbing Etzel to death. At this, the infuriated Huns cut her down, and the curtain falls with Dietrich's unexpected rise to supremacy, and his declaration of the meaning of the combat in freeing the world from heathendom, and from the scourge of Etzel's rule.

The added figures of Sirith and Hildiko, confidantes of Brunhild and Chriemhild, are doubtless concessions to the French drama.

Before giving in detail analogies between the two plays, it will be well to see Hebbel's attitude towards Raupach's work. Hebbel held Raupach worthy of consideration as a writer of successful plays, and above all of a successful Nibelungen tragedy, though he found the means which he used for his effects degraded and of the lowest theatrical type.

As early as July, 1835, Hebbel was thinking of Raupach and his methods, for he calls him a "Jew who deals in poetry and does not give *too* much for the money";¹ and in 1839, he referred to a discussion, with a friend, of Gutzkow's dramas, which he held in very low esteem. The friend at first defended them, "later, he declared that Gutzkow's dramas stood at

¹ Tgb. I. 60.

least distinctly higher than Raupach's poetic refuse. This I had never disputed."¹

Hebbel frequently expresses his general opinion of Raupach's method of composition and his real dramatic merit, and always with a degree of scorn. The highest praise that he ever has for him is that he is adroit and skilful in calculating upon theatrical effects, and capable in his treatment of minor subjects.

Hebbel's knowledge of Raupach's "Nibelungen-Hort" probably dates from the first time he saw Christine Enghaus in the play, and his first criticism of it appears when the possibility of his own use of the Nibelungen material becomes a probability in his mind, and again during the actual work of production. The anonymous article for the *Wanderer*, already referred to, is entirely devoted to a detailed account of the performance, on January 23d, 1853, of the "Nibelungen-Hort," the first in several years:—

"Considered in itself, this play to be sure falls below even the most modest requirements, and shows only the one thing, that there are materials which are absolutely not to be subverted. As it stands forth before us, it is like a many-colored painting which is put together in part from a mutilated Nuremberg picture-book, in part from the remains and left-over tatters of a Michel Angelo. The old, mighty epic which lies at the basis of the piece could not be destroyed entirely, here and there one or the other of the original gigantic outlines still looms up in the new beggarly medley, now and then one of the primitive knights still shows his iron hand. But the old only appears to slay the new, and then again to disappear. . . . How did he (Raupach) of necessity fare when he ventured the wild Hagen, the false Gunther, the enigmatic Brunhild, and the superhumanly terrible Chriemhild! . . . Now he draws on seven-league boots, now goes at a snail's pace, both usually at the wrong time. For like all those who do not understand the myth, he tries to motivate the fabulous which must count on belief, because it oversteps all bounds, and on the other hand he leaves unused the points where the heroes return to

¹ Tgb. I. 1865. 91 ff.

the human, and where the poet can bring them nearer to our feelings. In the case of such a colossal misunderstanding in the whole, we may spare ourselves the pointing out of details; most amusing seemed to us Siegfried's touching account of his adventure with the bear; namely, the knight omits to kill a bear because it occurs to him that Isegrim perhaps has a family just as well as himself.¹ But the evening was none the less most enjoyable for us, in the first place, because it once more vividly called to mind the mighty lay; second, because it showed us again the art of acting in its full power and majesty. For what was accomplished by the interpretation with such a piece! . . .

"We cannot omit to express a wish on this occasion which we have long had in our hearts. What a gain would it be for the nation if the 'dramatic Nibelungen-choard' were one day really raised! We know well what we are asking, and that a Shakesperean power is required to answer our demands in full! But in the first place we should like only to be freed from Raupach, we should like the original outlines of the wondrous poem shown forth once more, even if it were only in a sharp, unamplified sketch, and for that certainly the talent might be found. The drama requires support from the oldest transmitted accounts of a people, whether these be in saga or in history, if it is not to flutter about without a hold; let it point itself as subjectively as it will in its further development, only let not the general fundament be lacking. The Greeks based their dramas on their mythology, Shakespere transfused all English history into his drama, and our poets should hold to the Nibelungenlied, which in part carries us back to that time when Germani and Hindoos still lived unseparated in Asia. And our challenge can concern but a few; might no one be found to accept it? Failure would indeed be no disgrace."²

In his review of Geibel's "Brunhild," which appeared in the *Illustrierte Zeitung*, Leipzig, May 15th, 1858, Hebbel devotes nearly half the space to another searching criticism of the Raupach play, in which he partially quotes his previous article, and adds, "The reason for the failure lies in the motivation."³

¹ III. iv.

² W. XII. 19-21.

³ *Ibid.* 164-167.

Thus we see that Hebbel recognized exactly the principal defects of Raupach's work, and that he naturally avoided those faults himself. He felt that the *Nibelungenlied* should not be tampered with at will, the motives should indeed be kept human, but not be reduced to the trivial, nor should unnecessary inventions and impossible situations be allowed; each important person should be given his full meaning and value, and not be treated as a lay figure only to be dragged into the action to fill a gap, or eliminated as a nonentity. Yet while Hebbel strove consciously in the opposite direction, there are certain hints which he deliberately took from the "*Nibelungen-Hort*," and numerous suggestions and verbal likenesses which he may simply have imbibed from his accurate knowledge of Raupach's drama, but which certainly show too deep an impress upon his own work not to be of importance in a study of Hebbel's sources.

Aside from linguistic similarities and the borrowing of minor incidents, Hebbel seems to have adopted several important suggestions for the arrangement of scenes and the treatment of material from Raupach. Thus Hebbel has Ute and Kriemhild watch the games in a manner similar to that in which Raupach has Sirith and Brunhild's women witness and discuss the contests in Iceland.¹ Probably also the introduction of the dwarfs bearing the *Nibelungen* treasure to Worms, and Siegfried's mention of the dwarfs guarding the way to Brunhild, were suggested by Raupach's Prologue with Eugel and his company.² In both plays the hoard is brought to Worms at once by Siegfried's command.³ Hebbel connects a runic tablet with Brunhild, Raupach a runic girdle.⁴ Raupach's description of Isenland may have given Hebbel the idea for his much more poetic picture.⁵ Hebbel also seems to follow Raupach in omitting the ring, and in introducing a scene in which Kriemhild, who has found the girdle, inveigles Siegfried into telling her its story. The *Nibelungenlied* dismisses this incident with the simple statement that Siegfried "*gab ihn*

¹ Nn. Vors. iii.; Raupach I. v.

⁴ Nn. 688 ff.; Raupach I. vi. 46.

² S. T. II. vii.; Raupach Vors. i. 142-145.

³ S. T. II. vii.; Raupach Vors.

⁵ Nn. 827 ff.; Raupach I. i. 33 ff.

seinem Weibe."¹ Volker knows of Siegfried in both plays;² in the "Nibelungen," his reputation as an epic singer for being familiar with strange tales brings to mind Volker's own speech in the "Nibelungen-Hort," in which he tells the functions and privileges of the poet,³ and in both plays he is at times a prophetic visionary.⁴ Both poets place the quarrel scene entirely in front of the cathedral, instead of having it renewed there,⁵ both enlarge upon Hagen's wily endeavors to learn the secret of Siegfried's vulnerable spot,⁶ both have Etzel, not Kriemhild, set fire to the hall,⁷ and in both plays the final scene reaches its close with Dietrich emphatically before us as the Christian hero.⁸

Further similarities between Hebbel's "Nibelungen" and Raupach's "Nibelungen-Hort" are indicated in the following quotations:—

409-411. As Kriemhild and Ute are watching the games.

Ute.

Bricht über unser'm Haupt die Burg zusammen?
Das dröhnt!

Kriemhild.

Bis in den Thurm hinauf. Die Dohlen
Und Fledermäuse fahren aus den Nestern.

Raupach V. iv. 162. Eckart (calling the Burgundians to battle).

Es braust ein Sturm durchs Lager,
Und weckt die Dohlen und die Raben auf;
Sie kommen krächzend her zu diesem Thurme,
Als hätten sie von Beute Witterung.

537 f. Siegfried.

Mich trieb die Lust

Am Kampf so weit hinunter.

Raupach Vors. iv. 24. Siegfried.

Arbeit suchend zieh' ich

¹ S. T. III. iii.; Raupach II. iii.; Nl. 628.

² Nn. Vors. i. 88 ff.; Raupach Vors. iv. 25.

³ Nn. Vors. i. 81 ff.; Raupach V. i. 154.

⁴ S. T. II. vi. 1180; K. R. IV. i.; Raupach V. i.

⁵ S. T. III. vi.; Raupach II. v.; Nl. XIV. 758 ff., 776 ff.

⁶ S. T. IV. iii. v. vi.; Raupach III. i.

⁷ K. R. IV. xxiii.; 4975-4977, V. i., viii., 5068-5091.

⁸ K. R. V. xiv.; Raupach V. xii.

Von Land zu Land; zu Haus' ist alles still,
Und jungem Blut wird Zeit und Weile lang.

541-543, cf. page 62.

Raupach I. iii. 19. Eugel.

Denn seine Söhne — Fafner hiess der eine,
Der and're Reigen — nach dem Reichthum geizend,
Erschlugen ihren Vater, da er schlief.

665. Hagen.

(Legt den Finger auf den Mund, sieht Siegfried an und schlägt an's Schwert.)

Siegfried.

Bin ich ein Weib? In Ewigkeit kein Wort!

1371-1373. Hagen.

Wir steh'n allhier zu Dreien
Und haben, hoff' ich, keine einz'ge Zunge,
Der Vierte in uns'rem Bunde sei der Tod!

Mss. H Th. 1382 f., afterwards crossed out: —

Hagen.

Nur hievon nie ein Wort,
Selbst unter uns nicht mehr!

Raupach I. viii. 52.

Gunther.

Vergiss nicht, dass Du schweigen mir gelobt.

Siegfried.

Ich hab's gelobt, gelob' es abermals.

Gunther.

Doch hast Du jetzt gebrochen Dein Gelübde.

55. Hagen.

O Herr! auf die Beständigkeit des Windes
Und auf des Meeres Stille magst Du rechnen,
Auf die Verschwiegenheit des Menschen nicht.

750. Frigga.

Im Hekla.

Raupach Vors. i. 3.

Matter schimmert die Feuersäule,
Die aus dem Rachen des Ungethümes,
Wie aus der Esse des Hekla's stieg.

803 f. Siegfried (to Brunhild).

Der Ruf von Deiner Schönheit drang gar weit,
Doch weiter noch der Ruf von Deiner Strenge.

Raupach I. iv. 40. Gunther (to Sirith).

Der Ruf von ihrer Schönheit, ihrer Macht
Und ihrem Heldenmuth ist übers Meer
Zu uns gedrungen.

808 f. Brunhild.

Wer hier nicht siegt, der stirbt sogleich,
Und seine Diener mit.

Raupach I. iv. 40 f. Sirith.

Und wenn sie Dich besiegt?

Gunther.

So fällt mein Haupt.

Sirith.

Du redest wahr, so lautet das Gesetz,
Von ihren Eltern über sie verhängt.

816 f. Brunhild.

Lass Dir von meinen Mägden doch die Recken
Erst nennen, die von meiner Hand schon fielen.

153 f. Volker.

Bald kommt auf jedes Glied an ihrem Leibe
Ein Freier, den die kalte Erde deckt.

Raupach I. iv. 41. Sirith.

Lass Dir erst die bleichen Häupter zeigen,
Die der Walkühr' in gleichem Kampf verfallen.

843 f. Brunhild.

Was weisst denn Du von meiner Einsamkeit?
Noch hab' ich nichts aus Eurer Welt vermisst.

Raupach I. v. 43. Sirith.

Und ist das fremde Land auch zehnmal schöner,
Zur Heimath wird's doch nie, das sagen alle.

Ms. H before 930. Hagen.

Mir dünkt, die ist zum Weibe nicht bestimmt
Und wär' ich Du, so kehrt' ich (um!) jetzt noch um!

Raupach I. viii. 54. Hagen.

Mir ahnet, nicht zum Heile der Burgunden
Führst Du dies Heidenweib in Deine Burg.

* * * * *

Und wäre

Auch zehnmal mächtiger dies Königreich,
Ich nähm' es nicht mit dieser Königin.

1105. Brunhild.

Das Zeichen das zu seiner Magd mich stempelt.

Raupach I. vii. 48. Brunhild.

Die Liebe kenn'ich so nur, dass ich weiss,
Sie macht das Weib zu eines Herren Magd.

II. i. 59.

Darum vertauscht des reinen Magdthums Freiheit
Mit eines Eheweibes schnöder Knechtschaft.

1250 ff. Wulf and Truchs discuss the rival claims of Kriem-

hild and Brunhild, while watching the dwarfs who bear the Nibelungen treasure: —

Truchs.

Ich steh' zu Kriemhild.

Wulf.

So? Zu Brunhild ich.

Truchs.

Warum, wenn's Dir beliebt?

Wulf.

Wie brächtest Du

Dein Lanzenspiel zusammen, wenn wir Alle

Dieselbe Farbe hielten?

Raupach II. i. 58. Brunhild's first anger is aroused at the tourney:—

Nicht hundert Kämpfer stritten

In meiner Farbe; wohl dreihundert prangten

In Deiner Schwester Chriemhild Kleid und Schmuck.

1257 f. Truchs.

Es ist ein Unterscheid, wie Tag und Nacht.

Wulf.

Wer läugnet das? Doch Mancher liebt die Nacht!

This comparison of Kriemhild with Brunhild recalls Brunhild's speech:—

Raupach II. i. 59. Brunhild.

Ich habe stets

Den Mond gehasst, weil er sein schwarzes Antlitz

Mit dem erborgten Sonnenlichte schminkt,

Und soll nun selbst ein Mond seyn, nur gesehn,

Wann eine Kön'gin-Sonne ihn beleuchtet?

1354-1359. Hagen.

doch die Ehre,

Einmal erkrankt, und dann nicht rasch geheilt,

Steht niemals wieder von den Todten auf.

Und eines Königs Ehre ist der Stern,

Der alle seine Recken mitbeleuchtet

Und mit verdunkelt!

Raupach II. vii. 89. Hagen.

Es ist mein König, meiner Treue Herr,

Dess Ehre man so schwer gekränkt, verletzt,

Nein, auf den Tod verwundet, denn im Glauben

Des Volks, nicht in der Wahrheit liegt die Ehre.

91.

Mehr als Du selber bist,
Ist Deine Ehre, die noch nach Dir lebt.

In both plays Kriemhild finds the girdle.

1448. Kriemhild.

unter'm Tisch.

1451.

Ich fand ihn in der Kammer.

Raupach II. iii. 66. Chriemhild.

Geschmeide noch in Deinem Schreine suchend
Fand ich ihn wohl verwahrt, ja tief versteckt.

1453 f. Kriemhild.

Ich dachte,

Er stamme aus dem Nibelungenhort.

Raupach II. iii. 67. Siegfried.

Zum Nibelungen-Hort mag er gehören.

1469. Kriemhild.

Bald werd's ich's glauben.

1487-1490, cf. page 178.

Raupach II. iii. 68. Chriemhild.

Wie Du gelogen hast, so lügst Du wieder.

* * * * *

Nein, Heuchler! die den Gürtel hat getragen,
Die hat empfangen, was Du mir geraubt.

1475. Kriemhild.

Wie kam er denn in deine Hand?

Raupach II. iii. 66. Siegfried.

Hei! wie kommt das

In Deine Hand?

Chriemhild.

Wo hast Du ihn dann her?

1477 f. Kriemhild.

Du hast

Mir doch ein gröss'res anvertraut.

Raupach II. iii. 70. Chriemhild.

Du willst mir sagen, wess der Gürtel ist?

In both plays, Brunhild shows the same wild desire to have
Siegfried leave Worms:—

1495 f. Brunhild.

War das nicht Kriemhild?

Gunther.

Ja.

Brunhild.

Wie lange bleibt

Sie noch am Rhein?

1497-1499. Brunhild.

Ich geb' ihm Urlaub

Und schenke ihm den Abschied obend'rein.

Gunther.

Ist er Dir so verhasst?

Raupach II. ii. 61. Brunhild.

Doch Siegfried ziehe fort: lass heim ihn kehren
An seines Vaters Hof.

62.

Lass heim ihn ziehen, dass von Deiner Schwester
Ich nichts mehr wisse, höre, nichts mehr sehe.

63.

Und wenn

Du ihm die Welt verdanktest, lass ihn zieh'n!

1514 f. Brunhild (the morning after the final contest, to Gunther).
ich mögte

Jetzt lieber lauschen, wie die Spinnen weben.

Raupach I. vii. 48. Brunhild (warning Gunther from trying to win her
love).

Ich will

Nicht weben gleich der missgeschaff'nen Spinne.

1535-1545, cf. page 71.

Raupach II. i. 58 f. Brunhild.

Weil sie dies kann, ist sie die Königin.

Mein Hauptschmuck zeigt nur die Gestalt der Krone,

Ihr Stirnband hat der Krone Werth und Glanz.

Wie prangte sie! Ihr Haupt war sonnenhell,

Und ihr Gewand dem Winterhimmel gleich,

Wenn er sich schmückt mit allen tausend Sternen.

Wie Bienen hängen an der Königin,

So hingen alle Blick an ihr, und ich

Ward nur gesehen, weil ich neben ihr,

In ihrem Glanze sass.

1563-1568. Brunhild.

Ob er den Lindwurm schlug

Und Alberich bezwang: das alles reicht

Noch nicht von fern' an Dich. In Dir und mir

Hat Mann und Weib für alle Ewigkeit

Den letzten Kampf um's Vorrecht ausgekämpft.

Du bist der Sieger.

1653 f. Brunhild.

Eh' ich geboren wurde, war's bestimmt,

Dass nur der Stärkste mich besiegen solle —

Raupach II. v. 78. Brunhild.

Macht's Dich so stolz, dass er im Kampf um Dich
Ein unbehülflich Ungeheuer schlug?
Ich war gefürchtet auf dem weiten Meere,
Ich war der Lande Schrecken nah und fern;
Mein Leib war Riesenkraft und meine Seele
War Göttermuth; ich schlug die kühnsten Recken,
Und mich besiegte König Gunther's Arm:
Ein Held nur konnte diesen Sieg erringen.

1592-1594. Kriemhild.

Nun, ist's nicht besser, Kämpfe anzusehen,
Als selbst zu kämpfen?

Brunhild.

Hast Du Beides schon

Versucht, dass Du vergleichen kannst?

1624 f. Brunhild.

Ich will dafür geduldig auf Dich hören,
Wenn Du mir zeigst, wie man die Nadel braucht.

Raupach II. v. 78. Brunhild.

der Nadel nur,

Der Spindel kundig schwatzest Du von Kampf?

1662. Kriemhild (referring to the question of precedence in entering the cathedral).

Ich hätte Dir ihn wahrlich nicht versagt.

Raupach II. v. 76. Chriemhild.

Ich würde Dich

Erwartet haben an des Münsters Pforte,
Dass Du den Vortritt nähmest.

1681-1688. Kriemhild.

Ich liebe Dich auch jetzt

Noch viel zu sehr und kann Dich nie so hassen,
Um Dir den Grund zu nennen. Wäre Mir's
Gescheh'n, ich grübe mir mit eig'nen Händen
In dieser Stunde noch das Grab! Nein, nein!
Nicht ich will das elendeste Geschöpf,
Das auf der ganze Erde athmet, machen,
Sei stolz und frech, ich bin aus Mitleid stumm!

Raupach II. iii. 73. Chriemhild.

wenn ich sie

Auch nicht kann lieben, heg' ich Mitleid doch;
Sie könnt's nicht überleben, würd' ihr kund,
Wie arg man sie beleidigt und betrogen.

1720 f. Frigga.

Du kannst es Dir

Zwar nicht zurück erobern.

Raupach II. ii. 61. Brunhild.

Was Du geraubt, Du kannst's nicht wiedergeben.

1732 f. Kriemhild.

Vergieb mir, mein Gemahl! Ich that nicht recht.

Doch wenn Du wüsstest, wie Sie Dich geschmäht —

1743 f.

Wenn Du bedenkst, wie schwer Du mich gereizt.

Raupach II. vi. 82 f. Chriemhild.

Vergieb mir, Lieber!

Sie hat mich sehr gereizt, hat Dich gescholten,

Dich feig genannt und einen schlechten Mann.

85.

Ihr Stolz entriss mir mit Gewalt das Wort.

Hagen's warning to Gunther in the "Nibelungen-Hort" to separate women who hate each other finds its echo in the "Nibelungen," though here after the quarrel: —

1738-1741. Hagen.

Jetzt bringe nur

Die Weiber aus einander, die noch immer

Die Schlangenkämme wieder sträuben können,

Wenn sie zu früh' sich in die Augen seh'n.

Raupach II. ii. 62. Hagen.

Zwischen Frauen, die sich hassen,

Leg' ein Gebirg und noch ein Meer dazu.

64.

Wo sich die Frauen hassen,

Kann auch der Männer Freundschaft nicht bestehn.

vi. 84. Siegfried.

Hält man die Weiber nicht in guter Zucht,

So jagen sie den Frieden aus der Welt.

In both plays the necessity for the deed of murder is emphasized: —

1761. Hagen.

Dir blieb die Wahl ja zwischen ihm und ihr.

1937. Volker.

Und darum bleib's dabei: Er oder Sie!

1945 f.

jetzt

Ist diess das Ziel.

Raupach III. iii. 108. Hagen.

Freiheit hört nun auf,
Nothwendigkeit ist da für Dich und mich.

Hebbel seems to have followed Raupach in emphasizing the idea of bastard children being made a reproach to the Burgundians: —

1765-1769. Hagen.

Wollt Ihr Bastarde zieh'n an Eurem Hof?
Ich zweifle, ob die trotzigten Burgunden
Sie krönen werden! Doch Du bist der Herr!

Gerenot.

Der tapf're Siegfried wird sie schon bezwingen,
Sobald sie murren, wenn's uns selbst nicht glückt.

Raupach II. vii. 91. Hagen.

wann Dein Sohn einst Deine Mannen ruft
Zum Fest der Krönung und zum Eid der Treue,
So steigt das Blut der Scham in ihre Wangen —
Wohl mir! Ich werde diesen Tag nicht sehn —
Sie rufen laut: Fort mit dem kecken Buben,
Der König seyn will, und ein Bastard ist.

IV. iii. 138. Brunhild.

Was redest Du von meines Sohnes Ehre,
Den Du zum Bastard lügen wolltest?

IV. ix. 176. Chriemhild.

Lass sie's gesteh'n, dass er ein Bastard ist.¹

1912-1914. Hagen.

Man forscht

Ein Land doch aus mit allen seinen Pässen,
Warum nicht einen Helden?

Raupach III. i. 96. Hagen.

Wer aber eine Burg bewahren soll,
Der muss des Werkes schwache Seite kennen.

2149 f. Gunther.

Sie rechnet auf die That, wie wir auf Aepfel,
Wenn's Herbst geworden ist.

Raupach II. vii. 87. Brunhild.

Nun rathet,

Nicht, ob, nein — wie mir Rache werden soll.

* * * * *

Die Rach' ist mir gewiss.

Es sollen nicht zwei Männer seyn auf Erden,
Die meinen Leib berührt, und werden nicht.

¹ Cf. Nl. 810.

2236. Hagen.

Nun, hast Du Deine Spindel schon?

Gunther (scorning to turn back from his journey to the Huns because of the warning and evil portents, exclaims)

3786-3788.

Ich will

Nicht warten, bis der Heunenkönig mir
Ein Spinnrad schickt.

Raupach V. vii. 171. Chriemhild (inciting Etzel to the slaughter of the Burgundians, scorns him with the words)

Nehmt Spindeln in die Hand,
Und gürtet Euch mit einem Weibergürtel,
Den Rocken d'rein zu stecken.

2243. Kriemhild.

Wie kann man thun, was man sogleich bereut!

Raupach III. i. 97.

Ach! hab ich wohl gethan, dass ich's gesagt? ¹

2253. Kriemhild.

Wenn ich Euch theuer bin, wenn ihr es nicht
Vergessen habt, dass Eine Milch uns nährte.

Raupach IV. ii. 133. Chriemhild.

Du rede, Bruder, Du! Du hast mit mir
Gelegen unter einem Mutterherzen,
Mit mir getrunken einer Mutter Milch.

2283. Hagen, at the chosen spring, exclaims:—

Diess ist der Ort.

Raupach III. iii. 107. Hagen.

Diess, König, ist der Ort.

2295 f. Hagen.

doch ich halte

Die That darum nicht minder für gerecht.

Raupach III. iii. 109. Hagen.

Ich thue Recht.

2616-2618. Kriemhild.

Ich bin ein armes, halb zertret'nes Weib,
Und kann mit meinen Locken keinen Recken
Erdrosseln: welche Rache bliebe mir?

Raupach IV. i. 126. Gunther.

O Riesenfurcht! Was konnte sie beginnen,
Beraubt des Gatten und beraubt des Schatzes?

¹ Cf. Nl. 863.

Throughout "Kriemhild's Rache" we have hints of the family discord at Worms:—

2838. Gunther.

Im Hause Groll und Zwiespalt, draussen Schmach.

3849. Kriemhild.

Doch nein, sie hassen sich!

4529 f. Hagen (of Giselher).

Er hat kein mildes Wort mit mir gesprochen,
Seit wir zurück sind aus dem Odenwald.

5236-5242. Kriemhild.

Das konnt ich auch nicht ahnen, als ich sie
So mit einander hadern sah. Mein Grab
Im Kloster war nicht still genug, dass ich
Den ew'gen Zank nicht hörte: konnt' ich denken,
Dass sie, die sich das Brot vergifteten,
Sich hier so dicht zusammen knäueln würden,
Als hingen sie an Einer Nabelschnur?

Mss. H Th. 5242 ff., afterwards crossed out:—

Kriemhild.

Wenn sie die Rolle der Zusammen —
Gewachsenen Drillinge, die sich zerkratzten
Und doch vertheidigten, zu Ende (bringen) spielen,
So ändert's Nichts.

Raupach also insists upon unceasing quarrelling and wrangling among the Burgundians after Siegfried's death, and makes it a prominent feature in Acts IV. and V.

2863-2868. Hagen.

Wenn ich Dein Mann, Dein treu'ster Mann nicht wäre,
Wenn jeder Tropfen meines Blutes nicht
So für Dich pochte, wie das ganze Herz
Der Uebrigen, wenn ich, was Du erst fühlst,
Wenn es Dich trifft, nicht immer vorempfände,
Und tiefer oft, wie Du in Wirklichkeit.

Raupach I. viii. 55. Hagen.

Ich, Herr, bin Dein: die Treue gegen Dich
Ist meine einz'ge Lieb' auf dieser Welt,
Und Ehre, sonst des Mannes Königin,
Ist doch bei mir die Dienerin der Treue.

2885-2888. Hagen (referring to the murder of King Niblung for the sake of the treasure).

um dasselbe Gold,
Das Siegfried an den Rhein gebracht. Wer hätte

Sich's wohl gedacht, bevor sie's wirklich thaten?
Doch ist's gescheh'n und wird noch oft gescheh'n.

Raupach Vors. iii. 19. Chriemhild.

Lass Gold und Edelstein und künstlich Werk!
Sie haben einmal Blutschuld schon gezeugt,
Und könnten Blutschuld abermals erzeugen.

2895 f. Hagen.

Nur gebt ihr keine Waffen, muss ich rathen,
Wenn sie Euch selbst damit erreichen kann.

Raupach IV. i. 128. Hagen.

Du schärfst das Eisen selbst für Deine Brust.
Die gift'ge Schlange nährest Du mit Gift,
Damit sie tödtlicher Dich einst verwunde.
Der Schwergekränkten willst Du Macht verleihen.

2922. Ute.

in ihrem schwarzen Trauerkleide.

2929-2938. Hagen.

Ja, es war ein Bild,
Den Stein zu rühren! Und da Wohlthat drückt,
Und Jeder, um die Last sich zu erleichtern,
Auf irgend eine Art zu danken wünscht,
So hätte von den vielen Tausenden,
Die sich allmählig um sie sammeln mussten,
Zuletzt wohl Einer sie gefragt: Was weinst Du?
Um auf den kleinsten Wink das Schwert zu zieh'n
Und den zu rächen, der den Wurm erschlagen
Und auch den reichen Hort in's Land gebracht.

Raupach IV. i. 122. Hagen.

Und später nahm sie jeden Anlass wahr
An Edle Gold zu spenden, und an's Volk,
Und diese Spenden, mächtig unterstützt
Von ihrer Schönheit, ihrem tiefen Leid,
Gewannen ihr die Herzen, und man sprach
Von Siegfriids Unglück nur und ihrem Gram,
Und eine Mordthat schalt man uns're Rache.¹

125. Brunhild.

Denn wann sie in den langen schwarzen Schleiern,
Mit Trauer prahlend, auf dem Altan stand,
Den Knaben in dem Arm, so gafften sie
Und sprachen: Seht doch Siegfriids lieben Knaben!
Das arme Kind? Wie gleicht er schon dem Vater!
Gott schütz' ihn nur vor seiner Feinde Hass!

2967-2969. Kriemhild.

Ist von Menschen

¹ Cf. Nl. 994, 1000 ff., 1067 f.

Dem edlen Siegfried Einer nachgestorben?
Nicht einmal ich, doch wohl sein treuer Hund.

Raupach III. iv. 111 f. Siegfried.

Denn Thiere lieben auch.

Hagen.

Und ihre Lieb'

Ist ohne Wechsel, ohne Grenzen treu.

Siegfried.

Du redest wahr: die treue Dogge legt
Sich auf das Grab des Herrn, und alle Nahrung
Verschmähend stirbt sie dem Geliebten nach.
Was konnte mehr der Mensch?

Hagen.

Nicht mehr, doch diess.

2974-2977. Kriemhild.

unter Menschen

Erging's mir wohl zu schlecht, als dass ich nicht
Versuchen sollte, ob der wilde Wald
Nicht bess're Arten birgt.

2990-2992.

Auch kann sie ¹ mit der Zunge, die sie braucht,
Um ihren Feind zu tödten, ihm nicht schwören,
Dass sie ihn küssen will.

2996 f.

Zu ihnen hätt' ich, meinen Sohn im Arm,
Mich flüchten sollen.

Raupach II. vii. 91. Gunther.

Wer baute nicht beim wilden Thier sich an,
Wär solch ein Mann nicht sicher mehr bei Menschen?

3011 f. Ute.

Man wird ihm auch am Rhein das Fluchen lehren,
Denn Siegfrieds Vater hat das Recht dazu.

Raupach IV. i. 125. Hagen.

Sie sollt' an Siegmunds Hofe

Nicht Feindschaft spinnen gegen meinen König;
Das Mitleid nicht durch Klagen und durch Thränen
Zum Bundsgenossen ihres Hasses werben;
Den Knaben nicht mit seinem Abendsegen
Auch Rachgedanken lehren wider uns.

3087-3091. Kriemhild.

Denn man misst

Die Todten nach dem Schmerz der Lebenden,
Und wenn die Wittve freit, so denkt die Welt:
Sie ist das letzte unter allen Weibern,

¹ die Schlange.

- Oder sie hat den letzten Mann gehabt.
 Raupach III. ii. 104. Siegfried.
 Und Du, das weiss ich und das nehm' ich mit,
 Dass Du nicht mein Gedächtniss schmähen wirst,
 Nicht Schande laden auf des Kindes Haupt,
 Und, wenn auch jung, dem Zweiten Dich vermählen.
 Chriemhild.
 Verwerfe Gott mich, wenn ich's jemals thue!
 3151-3155. Kriemhild.
 Wenn Du die Krone und den Purpur nicht
 Zum blossen Staat mehr trägst und Schwert und Scepter
 Zum Spott —
 Gunther.
 Du redest scharf.
 Kriemhild.
 Das wollt' ich nicht!
 Doch wenn's so ist, und wenn auf Deine Krönung
 Die Thronbesteigung endlich folgen soll —
 Raupach II. vii. 89. Brunhild.
 O edler Degen! Günther trägt die Krone,
 Doch Du für ihn das königliche Herz.
 III. iii. 108. Brunhild.
 Reut's dich, feiger König,
 Dass einmal Du gedacht hast wie ein Mann?
 3238-3240. Rüdeger.
 der kein einz'ges Scepter
 In Königs-Händen unzerbrochen liess,
 Als das der Nibelungen.

This is perhaps suggested by the fear of Etzel expressed in the "Nibelungen-Hort":—

- Raupach II. ii. 63. Günther.
 In dieser Zeit,
 * * * * *
 Wo täglich drohender für uns im Osten
 Die Macht des wilden Hunnenkönigs wächst?
 IV. i. 126. Günther.
 Der allgewalt'ge Hunnenkönig Etzel —
 Hagen.
 Er steht am Donaustrom mit mächt'gem Heer.
 128. Günther.
 Wie thöricht wär's, aus Furcht vor Ungewissem
 Den sichern Zorn des Mächt'gen zu erregen,
 Dess Waffen alles Land von Sonnenaufgang
 Bis an die Grenzen unsers Reichs bezwungen?

3257. Kriemhild.
Verstell' Dich nicht! Du weisst, wie Siegfried starb.
3260. Rüdeger.
Und wenn ich's weiss?
- Raupach IV. vi. 147. Chriemhild.
Hast Du vernommen, welch unsäglich Weh
Die eig'nen Blutsverwandten mir bereitet?
- Etzel.
Ja, alles hat man wahrhaft mir berichtet.
3798. Werbel.
Dem Hornissschwarm erlag schon mancher Leu!
- 4153-4155, cf. page 76.
- Raupach II. iii. 64. Brunhild.
Doch leichter ist es, Löwen auszuweichen,
Als Scorpionen, die im Dunkel schleichen.
- 3800 f. Werbel.
Auch in der Wüste ehren
Wir einen Gast.
4725. Etzel.
Was soll noch heilig sein, wenn nicht der Gast?
- 4775 f.
nur müssen sie
In vollem Frieden erst geschieden sein.
4786.
Wie ich die Pflichten eines Wirthes kenne.
- Raupach V. ii. 156 f. Dietrich.
Hier sind sie Gäste,
Und ein geheiligt Recht beschützt den Gast.
- Etzel.
Sie waren meine Gäste hier im Zelt,
Und ungefährdet haben sie's verlassen.
Das Lager aber ist nicht meine Burg;
Der Boden, der es trägt, ist Günther's Reich,
Der allgemeine Himmel ist die Decke.
- iii. 161. Volker.
Lasst sie zuerst das heil'ge Gastrecht schänden.
- 3803-3805. Kriemhild.
Hier wird König Gunther frei,
Und wenn sich in Burgund der Henker findet,
So brauche ich die Heun'schen Rächer nicht.
- Raupach V. ii. 157. Blödel.
Hier wird der König
Aus Furcht bewill'gen, was Frau Chriemhild fordert.
- 4477 f. Hagen.
Vergiss Dich selbst und Deinen Theil nicht ganz!
Du trägst die grösste Schuld.

4501-4504. Hagen.

Doch Deine Hand hat mir ihn¹ dargereicht,
D'rum büsse selbst, wenn hier zu büssen ist.

Kriemhild.

Und büß' ich nicht? Was könnte Dir gescheh'n,
Das auch nur halb an meine Qualen reichte?

Raupach IV. ii. 131 f. Günther.

Nicht mich, nicht And're, Dich allein verklage.
Dein frech erfinderischer Geist, die Zunge,
Die frecher noch laut zu verkünden wagte,
Was still zu denken schon Verbrechen war.

4653-4655. Kriemhild.

Die blutigen Kometen sind am Himmel
Anstatt der frommen Sterne aufgezo-gen
Und blitzen dunkel in die Welt hinein.

Raupach IV. iv. 141. Chriemhild.

Feuerzeichen — O! gewöhn' Dich d'ran
Du wirst den Himmel ganz in Flammen seh'n. —

“Kriemhild's Rache,” IV. xiv., Etzel's description of his
terror-bringing campaigns and of his furious war steed recalls: —

Raupach IV. vi. 146. Etzel.

Ha! zu des Aufgangs Völkern
Hab' ich gesagt, beugt Euch vor meinen Knechten!
Sie haben sich gebeugt; befohlen hab' ich
Des Westens Landen: nährt mein Lieblingsross
Mit Eurem Mark; sie haben es genährt.

4792 f. Etzel.

Ich bringe Dir für jeden Becher Wein,
Den sie hier trinken, eine Kanne Blut.

Raupach IV. vi. 148. Etzel.

Für jede Thräne, die dem Aug' entrann,
Zahlt Dir ein Blutstrom aus der Feinde Herzen.

Raupach V. xi. 182. Chriemhild.

Für blut'ge Thränen Blut—das ist gerecht.

4794. Etzel.

Wenn ich auch jetzt die Mücken für sie klatsche.

Raupach II. vi. 83. Siegfried.

Bist Du bezahlt, die Mücken mir zu wehren?

4929-4931. Kriemhild.

Es ist ja Einer da,
Der alle Andern zum Verstummen bringt.
So spielt denn auf, Herr Volker!

¹ den Todesspeer.

Raupach V. i. 153. Blödel.

Ja, sing' ein Lied,
Mein wackrer Spielmann! Sing' ein fröhlich Lied!
4966-4977. Etzel.

Jetzt seid Ihr aus dem Frieden
Der Welt gesetzt und habt zugleich die Rechte
Des Kriegs verwirkt! Wie ich aus meiner Wüste
Hervorbrach, unbekannt mit Brauch und Sitte,
Wie Feuer und Wasser, die vor weissen Fahnen
Nicht stehen bleiben und gefalt'ne Hände
Nicht achten, räch' ich meinen Sohn an Euch
Und auch mein Weib. Ihr werdet diesen Saal
Nicht mehr verlassen, Ihr, Herr Dieterich,
Bürgt mir dafür, doch was den Heunenkönig
Auf dieser Erde einst so furchtbar machte,
Das sollt Ihr seh'n in seinem engen Raum!

Raupach V. viii. 172 f. Etzel (of Blödel)

Der Du mir theurer, als die Königreiche
Zu meinen Füßen warst, Du bist dahin,
Doch rächen will ich Dich, mit Schwert und Flammen
Ein Grabmal Dir erbau'n, wie keines noch
Gesehen worden zwischen Meer und Meer.

(Zu seinem Gefolge.)

Geht, saget Iring, die Burgundenritter
Soll er zu Boden schlagen — keiner lebe!
Ihr, Dietrich, Rüdeger, erstürmt den Thurm,
Und würet d'rin, so lang' ein Odem rauscht.
Blut ist der Zins, den heut ich von Euch fordre.

5075 f. Kriemhild.

Und bin ich für des Mitleids Stimme taub?
Sie waren's, als sogar der Stein zerschmolz.

Raupach IV. i. 121. Brunhild.

Ja, cher findest Du im rauhen Felsen
Ein fühlend Herz, als in der Eisenbrust.

5101-5103. Etzel.

Stamm um Stamm!

Sie haben meinen ausgelöscht, sie sollen
Auch selbst nicht fortbesteh'n.

Raupach V. xii. 184. Dietrich.

O schreckenvolle Nacht!

Zwei glanz- und machtbegabte Königshäuser
Hast Du verschlungen in die Finsterniss.

5323 f. Kriemhild.

statt den Dolch zu rauben und zu tödten,

Gleichviel, ob mich, ob ihn, sein Bett beschritt.

Raupach IV vi. 146. Chriemhild.

Was schützt Dich vor der Tischgenossin Gifte?
Was schützt Dich vor der Bettgenossin Dolch?

5308-5310. Rüdiger (begging to be released from his oath, urges his willingness to relinquish all his possessions).

Und, wie ein Greis, den die gewalt'ge Zeit
Von seinem Schwerte schied, in voller Kraft
An einem Bettelstab die Welt durchzieh'n.

Raupach IV. ii. 134. Chriemhild (begging to be spared a second marriage).

Ich will Euch alles lassen,
Was mir geblieben ist; ich will verschwinden,
Bei fremden Menschen mich als Magd verdingen,
Und wenn's dem königlich gewohnten Leibe
An Kraft zum harten Tagewerk gebricht,
Mein Brot erbetteln an den Kirchenporten.¹

5442. Kriemhild.

Das wär' ein Hohn auf dieses Weltgericht!

Raupach V. xii. 184. Dietrich.

ein irdisch Weltgericht.

5456. Dietrich.

Im Namen dessen, der am Kreuz erblich!

Raupach V. xii. 184. Dietrich.

Er, der des Lebens ew'ge Kette flicht,
Hat hier gehegt ein irdisch Weltgericht.

Rüdiger.

Und hat ein schweres Joch von uns genommen,
Und eine bess're Zeit wird leuchtend kommen,
Wie dort der Morgen durch die Wolken bricht.

Dietrich.

Der Erde langes Unglück ist gerochen:
Die Völkergeißel hat der Herr zerbrochen;
Erbarmend hat er unser Volk befreit
Von wilder Horden schnöder Dienstbarkeit,
Erlöst vom finstern Heidenthum die Erde:
Nun lasst uns handeln, dass es besser werde.

These are the principal places where a similarity of idea, motive, or language seems worthy of mention. But it is noticeable throughout Raupach's play that he emphasizes the contrast between Christianity and heathendom, however superficially. The veneer of Christianity which we find applied in the *Nibelungenlied* is more thickly distributed in the "Nibelungen-Hort," but is quite as apparently a separate and

¹ Cf. *Nl. C.* 2216.

distinct addition. With Raupach, it is a purely surface antagonism, without real influence upon the characters. There is no attempt at depicting the struggle between dying heathendom and conquering Christianity, no attempt at a deep psychological study of the two beliefs in their effect upon their representatives; simply a cheap use of the words *Gott, Himmel, heilige Jungfrau*, an artificial reference to church and creed, an affected horror of the "Christian Burgundian" for the heathen Gods, and of the heathen Amazon for the Christian beliefs and customs.

Chriemhild makes a vow to the *heilige Jungfrau* to serve Siegfried should he conquer the dragon,¹ and in begging him not to accept the treasure, she warns him:—

dieser Hort
Ist eitel Heiden-, eitel Zaubergräu'l;

and anxiously adds:—

Du bist doch auch ein Christ?

to which Siegfried satisfactorily replies:—

Ich bin ein Christ.²

Gunther, upon landing at Isenland, piously exclaims:—

Der Himmel schenk' uns ferner Glück und Hülfe,
Wie er bis jetzt vor Unfall uns bewahrt.

and Hagen replies:—

Das ist ein gut Gebet: der Himmel helfe!³

Brunhild's women, on the other hand, appeal to the heathen Gods for protection and help:—

Die grossen Götter mögen so es wenden!⁴

Hagen, as he joins Brunhild in warning Gunther not to attempt to win her love, is made to say:—

Das Herz der Königin; das ist kein Boden
Für unsers Glaubens milde Saat.⁵

¹ Vors. ii. 14.

² *Ibid.* iii. 20.

³ I. i. 32.

⁴ I. v. 43.

⁵ I. viii. 54.

In her anger against Chriemhild for her greater display and popularity, Brunhild angrily answers Gunther's question:—

Wie kann Dich das erzürnen?

Was denn soll,

Was—bei den grossen Asen!—mich erzürnen?

to which Gunther exclaims:—

Du wagst die Heidengötter noch zu nennen?

and admonishes her:—

Du solltest fleissiger zur Messe gehen.¹

After the quarrel scene, Gunther tries to restore peace by the words:—

Lasst ab vom Hader! kommt zum heil'gen Amte,
Und betet drinnen um ein friedlich Herz.

to which Brunhild makes angry reply:—

Ich will nicht mehr zu Euern Göttern beten.²

Dankwart advises Gunther to believe Siegfried's oath:—

Wenn ihn Herr Siegfrid an geweihtem Orte
Noch einmal schwöret auf das Sacrament.³

Chriemhild, after intrusting to Hagen the secret of Siegfried's vulnerability, bids him a pious farewell with the words:—

Der gute Führer Gott, geleite Dich! ⁴

Siegfried, with equal piety, in answer to Chriemhild's fears for his safety when he takes leave of her, expresses his readiness for death:—

Wenn aber Gott nach Hause ruft und spricht:
Du hast genug gespielt in meinem Garten;
Soll ich dann greinen wie ein böser Bube?
Du bist ein christlich Weib, sprich! soll ich das?⁵

His dying regret is expressed in the words:—

O hätt' ich nie den bösen Hort gewonnen,
Die Zauberkappe nie! so hätt' ich nicht

¹ II. i. 59.

² II. vi. 84.

³ II. vii. 88.

⁴ III. i. 97.

⁵ III. ii. 103.

Den Giftschwamm Deines heidnisch bösen Herzens
Getragen in ein christlich reines Haus.¹

Etzel's oath of vengeance to Chriemhild is:—

Beim weissen Gott, dem Geber alles Guten!
Beim schwarzen Gott, dem Stifter alles Unheils,
Und bei des Himmels Geissel, meinem Schwerte!²

At the wedding feast of Etzel and Chriemhild, Brunhild scornfully hopes that Chriemhild's future sons will reconcile her with heathendom.³

Gunther calls upon God in his submission to the inevitable; to Etzel he says:—

Der droben, der ein grössrer König ist,
Als ich und Du, hat zwischen uns gerichtet;
Und wer darf murren wider seinen Spruch?

and to his sister:—

Du schienst so gut, die Hölle schlief in Dir.⁴

The final scene closes with Dietrich's expression of belief in the working of a higher might, and of thankfulness that the earth is released from heathendom.

In a letter to Franz von Dingelstedt, March 31, 1860, Hebbel speaks of the great mistake "of representing the mighty Dietrich as a dummy for whom a few pencil-strokes suffice, and yet intrusting him at the end with the sword of fate."⁵ Raupach has raised him only at the very end above his fellows, without giving any reason for so doing; Hebbel insists throughout "Kriemhilds Rache" upon Dietrich's superiority and supremacy. However much Hebbel excelled his predecessor in depicting the opposed forces of Christianity and heathendom, it is not at all unlikely that the idea of representing the contrast came from a knowledge of Raupach's method, which suggested to him a mode of treatment fully in accord with his own pronounced tendency to psychological speculation.

¹ III. v. 115.

² IV. vi. 149.

³ V. i. 152.

⁴ V. x. 178.

⁵ Bw. II. 60.

2. FOUQUÉ

Friedrich Baron de la Motte Fouqué was the first modern poet to make use of the Norse sources of the Nibelungensaga. "Sigurd der Schlangentödter, Ein Heldenspiel in sechs Abenteuern," the first part of his trilogy, "Der Held des Nordens," appeared in 1808; while the two additional portions, "Sigurd's Rache, Ein Heldenspiel in sechs Abenteuern," and "Aslauga, Ein Heldenspiel in drei Abenteuern," appeared, together with the first part, in 1810, and the first three volumes of the selected edition of his works, published in 1841, are devoted to the trilogy.

In his twelfth year, Fouqué first felt the charm of the Norse-saga-world through Denis's translations, and from that time he dreamed of the work which he at last composed in the form of a trilogy. Meantime, he had written a dramatic scene, "Siegfried in der Schmiede,"¹ for which he drew his material from the copy of the "gehörnter Siegfried im Heldenbuchsreime in 8° sine anno," owned by von der Hagen. The Nibelungenlied was not without influence upon the young poet, but it was the Norse literature which finally impelled him to serious creative activity.

At the instigation of August Wilhelm Schlegel he began to study Icelandic, Danish, and Swedish, and as the concluding word to his collected works, Fouqué describes the effect produced upon him by the study of the Icelandic literature, and tells his own intentions in his work of production, as well as the sources which he employed. "From the contemplation of those majestic northern lights, such as the study of the Icelandic language disclosed to me, and at the same time from the acquaintance with the Danish and Swedish idiom, — one might compare both to the magic gold-maidens who, according to Homer, accompany Hephestus, the magic artist rich in old secrets, for in like manner do they introduce to us that primitive, powerful Edda language which has only become clumsy for moderns, — from a contemplation which at the same time

¹ Friedrich Schlegels *Europa*, 1803.

offers and solves enigmas, there arose within me such a deep reverence that the fantastic jugglery of personal invention was no longer to be thought of. To reproduce the portion of the old, wondrous days which had fallen to my share, that was, in respect to Siegfried — Norse Sigurd — my principal, indeed I may say, my whole, my only endeavor. It may be that as yet scarcely a poet of modern times has felt so keenly from his own experience what the old Greeks had in mind with the ‘ἐνέπειν,’ the ‘Hereinsingen’ of the apostrophized muse; more keenly, certainly not one! — If at that time I had seen the second part of Saemund’s Edda, containing the old, old song dialogues between Sigurd and Brynhildur and similar material, I should probably scarcely have dared to construct my version in the transmitted portions otherwise than as pure translation. But it may even be just as well now as it has turned out. Not until years after the completion of his three Sigurd poems, could their singer gain a knowledge of those primitive songs. Earlier than this, he could only glean from the Edda of Snorri Sturleson, the Nornagest-Saga, the Volsunga-Saga, and some information from friendly antiquarians.”¹

The object of Fouqué’s trilogy, or heroic plays, as he chose to call them, was to represent Sigurd’s “life, death, revenge, and race” in alliterative metrical forms as nearly like those of the old Norse poetry as would suit his age and language.

The first play begins with the forging of Sigurd’s sword from the shards of his father Siegmund’s weapon,² and ends with the burning of the bodies of Brynhildur and Sigurd upon the same funeral pyre.³ In the main, Fouqué follows the account in the Volsungasaga with far too great fidelity for dramatic strength, and where his own hand is visible it is in enlargement or character delineation which neither enlightens nor helps to motivate. As past occurrences, he refers to the saga account of Siegmund’s sword-winning,⁴ to Sigurd’s choosing of a horse,⁵ and as an event which has occurred after the smithying of the sword, to Sigurd’s vengeance upon his father’s slayers.⁶ He

¹ XII. 122 ff.

² Vs. 15.

³ *Ibid.* 31.

⁴ *Ibid.* 3.

⁵ *Ibid.* 13.

⁶ *Ibid.* 17.

combines the two accounts of Brynhildur's homes with little less confusion than occurs in the Volsungasaga, making Sigurd first visit her in her flame-surrounded fortress, and later in the castle of her brother-in-law Heimer.¹ The Volsungasaga also furnishes the material for the magic drink and the marriage of Sigurd with Gudruna,² for Sigurd's winning of Brynhildur in Gunnar's form,³ as well as for the quarrel at the river,⁴ Sigurd's death at Gutthorm's hand,⁵ and Brynhildur's lament, prophecy, death by her own hand, and burning upon Sigurd's pyre.⁶

The second part of the trilogy carries the story from Gudruna's castle in the woods,⁷ to Atli's vengeance on the Giukings, and his death at the hands of Niflung and Gudruna.⁸ Gunnar, Högne, and Grimhildur find Gudruna in her lonely castle, and by means of the drink of forgetfulness persuade her to marry Atli.⁹ Fouqué motivates Gunnar's desire to wed Gudruna to Atli by the fear that Atli will wreak vengeance upon them for his sister Brynhildur's early death.

The first "Adventure" contains an incident not found in the Volsungasaga, the accusation against Dietrich and Gudruna by Herke, Atli's mistress, and Gudruna's justification through the test of boiling water.¹⁰ The poet ascribes to the ensuing reconciliation between Atli and Gudruna the immediate cause of his invitation to Gudruna's brothers. The sending of the messengers, Gudruna's attempt to warn her brothers, the evil dreams of the wives of Gunnar and Högne, the hostile appearance of Atli's fortress, and the slaying of the false messenger, all follow the saga.¹¹

Fouqué materially enlarges upon the details of the combat and Gudruna's part in it, as well as upon the incident with the children of Atli and Gudruna, to whom he gives the names Ortlieb¹² and Asmund.¹³ Fouqué also gives to Högne's son, Niflung, a large part in the battle; from the saga he adapts

¹ Vs. 20, 23. ² *Ibid.* 26. ³ *Ibid.* 27. ⁴ *Ibid.* 28. ⁵ *Ibid.* 30. ⁶ *Ibid.* 31.

⁷ Cf. Vs. 32, where Gudrun wanders through the woods, but finally goes to Denmark, where she remains for three and a half years with Thora, Hakon's daughter.

⁸ Vs. 38.

¹⁰ Gþr. III.

¹² Nl. XXIII. 1328.

⁹ Cf. *Ibid.* 32.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 33-35.

¹³ Vs. 38.

Niflung's share in the murder of Atli ¹ and Gudruna's attempt to kill herself by drowning.²

The third play of the trilogy contains the story of Aslauga, the daughter of Brynhildur and Sigurd, whom the author of the Volsungasaga probably invented to glorify the house of King Ragnar Lodbrok.³ Fouqué follows closely the Ragnarssaga through its first eight chapters, and omits the contents of the remaining thirteen.⁴ From the very nature of its material, it bears no relation to Hebbel's play, unless in the one possible case of Aslauga's connection with the ravens.

Hebbel's only critical mention of Fouqué's work is in his review of Geibel's "Brunhild."⁵ In discussing the possibility of a dramatization of the Nibelungen saga, he compares Fouqué's real poetical talent with Raupach's undeniable theatrical genius, and points out in a few words Fouqué's chief faults. While the trilogy is not lacking in single characteristic features, it suffers from "that studied dignity which is quite as unvarying as it is unbearable, and impedes the circulation of the blood, so that the people fall dead as on the high Alps; he depicts creatures who are no longer akin to us, because they, like the dwellers on the moon, if it had any, can live without air or water. . . . Fouqué does not motivate at all, he presents his heroes like mathematical quantities, and when they regard death as the chief joke of existence, and sing battle songs while in the serpent's den, and already attacked by the reptiles, we are as little surprised as by a new assertion of the familiar proposition that twice two are four, but we are also quite as little touched and moved." Fouqué's poem has certain lyric features of the best romantic poetry, but it lacks all the qualities which are constituent parts of every true drama: life, conciseness, motivation, and a sym-

¹ Vs. 38.

² Vs. 39.

³ Cf. Vs. 27; Sk. 7.

⁴ The earlier editors published the Volsungasaga and Ragnarssaga together so that Fouqué undoubtedly read this continuation of the story, although he does not distinctly mention it. The first edition was by Björner, "Nordiska Kämpadater," Stockholm, 1737, XI. and XII.; von der Hagen's edition, which is based on Björner's text, was not published until Fouqué had completed his trilogy.

⁵ W. XII. 164 f.

pathetic nearness to the reading and hearing public. To the modern reader, Fouqué's trilogy, with its slavish adaptation of material and metre, and its extensive compass, is much more tiresome than Raupach's once successful piece of theatrical machinery.

In citing Hebbel's possible borrowings from Fouqué's play, several passages are referred to which have already been quoted under his use of Norse material. Occasionally, it is difficult to tell from which source Hebbel directly took the suggestion, but where the material is not contained in the Eddas, it seems probable that he drew from Fouqué, since we find no reference to his knowledge of the Volsungasaga.

Vorspiel iii. describes the throwing contest between Siegfried and the Burgundians at his first appearance among them. Fouqué likewise depicts a contest between Sigurd, Gunnar, and Högne immediately following Sigurd's arrival at Giuke's court.

355-359. Ute (watching the contest).

Nicht weiter?

Kriemhild.

(*nähert sich*).

Hast Du ihn zu früh gelobt?

Ute.

Das ist ja nur Ein Schuh!

Kriemhild (*tritt hinter Ute*).

Noch immer mehr,

Als wär' es nur Ein Zoll. . . .

Ute.

Um Einen Schuh

Dies Kind zu überwerfen —

Kriemhild.

Ist nicht viel!

Besonders, wenn man sich dabei noch spreizt.

379-381. Ute.

Gerenot ist auch

Besiegt, wie Giselher.

Kriemhild.

Es macht zwar wieder

Nur Einen Schuh!

391-396. Kriemhild.

König Gunther drängt

Herrn Dankwart ungestüm zurück, er will

Sich selbst versuchen.

Ute.

Und er thut's mit Glück.

Zweimal so weit, als Gerenot.

Kriemhild.

Und dennoch

Nicht weit genug. Du siehst, der Recke folgte
Sogleich, und wieder fehlt der Eine Schuh.

Fouqué I. 99.¹ Gunnar.

Ein Fechtmeister?

Sigurd.

Ja, des Fechtens Meister.

Gunnar.

Ich mögt's versuchen.

Högne.

Lass mir Jünger'm heut

Den Vortritt, weil's ein blosses Scherzen gilt.

Gunnar.

Mein'twegen.

Högne (*einen Stein werfend*).

Thu' mir's nach, du fremder Held.

Sigurd (*lachend*).

Das? (*wirft einen Stein.*)

Högne.

Weiter! Wahrlich, weiter viel, als ich!

Sigurd (*zum Gefolge*).

Mess' Einer nach, wie viel.

Högne.

Der ist verhext.

Im Steinwurf thät' ein Mensch es mir zuvor?

Gunnar.

Will ihn demüth'gen, Bruder. Gräm' dich nicht.

Ein Diener (*zurückkommend*).

Des Fremden Stein liegt um zwei Drittel weiter,

Als der, so meines Königs Sohn versandt.

360. Kriemhild.

Für einen solchen Riesen.

1536 f., cf. page 71.

Cf. also 2165 ff., 3581 ff.

Fouqué follows the Volsungasaga in emphasizing the greatness of Sigurd's stature:—

I. 93. Bote.

Mehr hohen Göttern, als den Menschen gleich.

* * * * *

¹ References are by page to Fouqué's *Ausgewählte Werke*, I.-III.

Gross ist er, kopfshoch grösser, edler Fürst,
Als deine Söhne.

I. 94.

Von seiner Hüfte klirrt ein mächt'ges Schwert,
Wohl sieben Spannen lang, doch scheint's an ihm
Nicht eben länger als 'ne andre Wehr.¹

489 ff., cf. page 60.

1653 f., cf. page 113.

Fouqué I. 141. Brynhildur (to Sigurd).

du sei'st

Gesprengt durch Hindarfiall's hochglüh'nde Flamme,
Die Wafurloga heisst bei Zaubers-Kund'gen,
Und nur, (es lebt ein bannend Wort darin)
Nur einem einz'gen Helden Durchzug gönnt.

541-543, 2884 f., cf. page 62.

Fouqué, like Raupach, departs from the Volsungasaga in making both brothers their father's murderers:—

I. 58.

Hreidmar nahm Ring und Schatz,
Hreidmar'n schlugen die schlimmen Kinder todt.

615 ff., cf. page 62.

Fouqué also emphasizes Sigurd's understanding of the language of birds:—

I. 52.

Ja, aber hier ist auch das Schwalbenpaar,
Vor allen recht vernehmlich zu mir singend
Ein wunderliches Lied. Es handelte
Von mir.

Hebbel seems to have followed Fouqué in making the birds prophesy evil to him:—

1275 ff., 2326 ff., 2945 ff., cf. page 69 f.

Fouqué I. 168.

Mir sagt es mein Gemüth, und was die Vögel
Hell aus den Lüften sangen in mein Ohr:
Bald ihres Lebens Band zerbricht der Schmerz.

Fouqué connects two ravens with Aslauga, Sigurd's daughter, just as Hebbel connects the ravens with Siegfried:—

III. 112 f. Ragnar.

sagt doch, was woll'n die beiden Vögel,

¹ Vs. 22, 26; cf. Thidr. 162, 164, 166.

Die wunderlichen, lauschenden Geschöpfe,
Dort auf des Thurmes altem Sims?

Harald.

Die lass

Und knüpf' ein All'n erfreulich Eheband.

Ragnar.

Sie blicken so gar hässlich klug herab,
Und lauern auf jedwedes Wort von mir.

Jagt die erst fort.

(man wirft mit Steinen nach den beiden Vögeln. Sie fliegen etwas höher auf, und bleiben wieder sitzen.)

Ragnar.

Zudringliches Geschmeiss!

Was so ein Thier sich zu verwundern hat,
Und d'rein zu schau'n in Alles, was man thut.

Cf. Fouqué III. 115.

124. Aslauga.

Kein Mensch hat mir den Vorgang angesagt.
Sah'st Du nicht meine Vögel? Nah' bei Euch
Auf eines Thurm's Gesimse lau'rten sie;
Die kundeten den ganzen Handel mir.

755-766. Frigga.

Wie ging es zu,

Das wir uns diesen Morgen, statt im Bett,
Unausgekleidet auf den Stühlen fanden,
Die Zähne klappernd und die Lippen blau?

Brunhild.

Wir müssen plötzlich eingeschlafen sein.

Frigga.

Ist das uns schon begegnet?

Brunhild.

Nie zuvor.

Frigga.

Nun denn! Der Greis war hier und wollte reden!
Mir ist sogar, als hätt' ich ihn geseh'n,
Wie er Dich rüttelte und mich bedrohte,
Dir aber ward durch einen dicken Schlaf
Das Ohr verstopft, weil Du nicht hören solltest,
Was dir beschieden ist, wenn Du beharrst.

781 f. Frigga.

Vielleicht steh'n alle Götter unsichtbar
Um Dich herum.

Fouqué I. 61-63. The three Norns, Wurdur, Werdandi, and Skuld, walk about the sleeping Brynhildur in prophecy before Sigurd appears and awakens her.

918-920, cf. page 68.

Fouqué I. 66 f. Brynhildur knows Sigurd's name, origin, and deeds at his first appearance, and in reply to his expressed astonishment, says:—

Du wüsstest nicht, dass die erhabne Kunst
Der Weissagung, und sonst die Heimlichkeit
In Erd' und Himmel, sie die stille Blüthe
Der ganzen Welt, den schönsten Wohnort sich
Auf dieser ganzen Welt zu suchen pflegt?
Ich meine, schöner Frauen klaren Geist.

I. 206 ff. As in the Edda and Volsungasaga, Brynhildur prophesies before she dies.

1563-1568, cf. page 113.

Fouqué I. 157. Gudruna.

Den Faffner und den Reigen traf sein Schwerdt,
Ihr wunderreiches Erb' gewann er sich.

Brynhildur.

Prahl' nicht mit seinem düstern Haidezug;
Denn höher war, ich schwör's bei allen Göttern!
Viel höher war des kühnen Gunnar That
Als er durch Wafurloga zu mir ritt.

1757. Brunhild.

Ich ess' nicht mehr, bis Ihr den Spruch vollzieht.

1931-1935. Volker.

Ich hörte, dass die Königin
In Trauerkleidern geht und Trank und Speise
Verschmäh't, sogar das Wasser.

2064-2066. Kriemhild.

Ist es wahr,

Dass sie nicht isst und trinkt?

Hagen.

Sie fastet immer

Um diese Zeit. Es ist die Nornenwoche.

2068. Kriemhild.

Es sind drei Tage schon!

Fouqué I. 168. Gudruna.

Seit dreien Tagen liegt sie stumm und starr
Im Todesschlaf.¹

Cf. Vs. 29: "This do I not bring to pass, to waken her, nor to speak with her, and many days did she drink neither mead nor wine." Gudrun spake: "She has now slept seven days."

¹ Cf. also 162 ff.

1761, 1937, cf. page 115.

1772 f. Brunhild.

Frigga, mein Leben oder auch das seine!

Frigga.

Das seine, Kind!

Fouqué I. 175. Brynhildur.

Einer von uns Drei'n

Muss sterben: du, ich oder Sigurd!

182. Gunnar.

Nun so sterb' ich selbst.

Hast zwischen Sigurd oder mir die Wahl.

Vs. 29. Brynhild. "And this shall be the death of Sigurd or of thee or of me."

2800-2814, cf. page 73.

2818-2822. Gunther.

Das mild'ste Wort entlockt ihr nie ein Lächeln,
Und hätt' ich's Volkers frischem Liedermund
In einer gold'nen Stunde abgefangen,
Das härteste noch minder eine Thräne,
Sie kennt den Schmerz und auch die Lust nicht mehr.

2824-2826.

Stumpf blickt sie d'rein, als wär' ihr Blut vergraben
Und wärme eines Wurmes kalt Gedärm,
Wie man's in alten Mähren hört.

3814-3819. Werbel.

Nun, es wird geflüstert,

Dass sie in einem Grabe haus't.

Kriemhild.

Und doch

Nicht todt?

Werbel.

Sie hat es gleich nach Dir bezogen,
Fort in der Nacht, nach Wochen erst entdeckt,
Und nicht mehr weg zu bringen.

Sie — Brunhild —

Kriemhild.

In Siegfrieds heil'ger Ruhestatt?

Werbel.

So ist's.

3814-3819. Ms. H. Werbel (to Kriemhild).

Man erzählt sich so.

Die Königin ist plötzlich ohne Sinne,
Sie hört und sieht nicht mehr und setzt den Becher,
Aus dem sie eben trinkt, nicht wieder ab,

Als wär' er ihr am Munde festgewachsen,
So dass die Gäste es mit Grausen seh'n.

Fouqué I. 158. Gudruna.

Brynhildur! Auf ein Wort! — Sie achtet's nicht —
O Schwäg'rin, hör' doch! Mich gereut mein Trotz! —
Umsonst. Mit langsam grossen Schritten fort
Geht sie zur Burg, bleich, wie ein zürnendes,
Nicht athmendes, blutleeres Nachtgespenst.

162 f. Gunnar.

Festen, starren Schlaf's

Liegt sie noch immer fort.

* * * * *

Högne.

Erst, als sie tobte, schrie, selbst wider dich
Die Mörderhand erhob, — wie war dir da?

Gunnar.

Besser, als jetzt. Sie lebte. Nun wie todt
Liegt vor mir das geliebte Bildniss —

173. Brynhildur (to Sigurd, as he tries to pacify her anger,
and declares his unchanging love for her).

Glaubst Du, man hört dergleichen Wort' und bleibt
Ein steinern kaltes Bild auf alten Gräbern?

202.

(Brynhildur erhebt ein wildes Gelächter.)

Gunnar.

Was lachst du? — Lache nicht! — Bitt' dich, halt' ein;
Von draussen jener unheilschwang're Laut,
Und hier im Zimmer dein verzerrtes Antlitz!
Denn Freude nicht, auch Sieg nicht lacht aus dir;
Nichts weiss von deiner tollen Lustigkeit
Das Herz in deinem Busen.

206. Gunnar.

Was? Bricht das grause höhnische Getön
Durch deine bleichen Lippen wieder vor?¹

4139 ff., cf. page 76.

Fouqué II. 116. Ortlieb. Den warfen sie alsbald
In die grau'nvolle Schlangenhöhl' hinab.

117. Ja, in die Schlangenhöhle.
Da hält' mal das Gewürm ein gutes Mahl.
Sonst, heisst es, wär' es noch verschmachtet gar.

Gudruna.

Da, wo die Molch', und Nattern lauern — Er! —

¹ Cf. Vs. 29, 30.

Asmund.

Glaub's nur; ich sah, wie man hinab ihn stieß,
Vernahm tiefer des Drachenvolk's Gezisch.

Cf. 120.

124 f. Gunnar.

Wie klirrt die Angel dumpf im Wiederhall!
Eins-Zweimal! Weithin dröhnt die alte Gruft.
Horch! Und die alten Schlangen wachen auf.
Mit tausendfacher Regung wirrt sich's los,
In Klumpen scheuslich erst, nun scheuslicher
In vielgelenk'ger, windender Entwick'lung!
Der Eine dort hebt seinen rothen Kamm
Lang über's andre Drachenvolk hervor —
Hu, wie im Rachen rasch die Zung' ihm spielt —
Er will auf mich — ihn hungert sehr nach mir —
Nur sitzt er mit dem schuppig langen Schweif
Noch zwischen and'ren Ungeheuern fest.
Er ist sehr gräulich — gräulicher noch der,
Der unbeholfen in der Mitte liegt.
Ich glaub', man heisst solch Unthier einen Molch.
'S hat noch nicht ausgeschlafen — blinzelt die Augen —
Was? Träum' ich, oder ist es gar ein Mensch?
Nein, nur den Spott des Menschenangesichts
Trägt er auf seiner Larve. — Wie er gähnt!
Nun wälzt er seinen dicken Leib hervor.
Der Lange kräuselt sich ihm nach — O, mir!
Tod ist nur Spiel, doch Hölle dies Entsetzen!

4309-4316. Volker.

In Strömen rinnt das Blut, und wie's erstarrt,
Verdunkelt sich das Gold, um das es floss,
Und strahlt in hellerm Schein.

Hagen.

Ho, ho! Das Gold!

Volker.

Schon ist es roth und immer röther wird's
Mit jedem Mord. Auf, auf, was schont ihr Euch?
Erst, wenn kein Einz'ger mehr am Leben ist,
Erhält's den rechten Glanz, der letzte Tropfen
Ist nöthig, wie der erste.

Fouqué I. 210. Brynhildur.

Denn Blut auf Gold erschafft gar kecken Schein.
Blut ist ja lebend Gold, und Gold — Ihr Kinder —
Ist ja hellglänzend, schöngeläutert Blut.

4320-4322, 4324-4326, 4334-4336, cf. page 78.

Fouqué I. 58.

Andwar verflucht' ihn, den Ring;

Fort reiss' deinen Herrn,
 Reiss', Ring, deinen Herrn, wer er sei auch,
 Rasch fort in Verderb!

213. Brynhildur.

Du siehst vor all' der Goldesblendung nicht
 Den schwarzen Fluch, der grau'nvoll d'rüber hin
 Die nächt'gen Flügel dehnt. — Es reisst euch abwärts
 In thöriger Betäubung.

4399 f., cf. page 80.

Fouqué I. 58.

Klang Andwar's des Klugen,
 Bitten gar kläglich:
 Lass mir den einen, feinen Ring!
 Der schafft mir neuen Schatz.

4562-4565. Dietrich.

Die Andern aber haben
 Den Hort, um den sie doch soviel gewagt,
 Die Nacht vor ihrer Fahrt bei Fackelschein
 Auf Nimmerwiederseh'n im Rhein versenkt.

Fouqué II. 84-88. *Am Rheinufer.*

85. Gunnar.

Mach' mich doch nicht betrübter, als ich bin.
 Mir kommt ohn'hin schon Alles traurig vor.
 Zum Beispiel als bewahrten wir den Schatz
 Hier in des Rheines dunkeltiefer Fluth,
 Um nimmermehr ihn wieder anzuschau'n.

Both poets place the burying of the hoard immediately before the departure of the Burgundians for Etzel's court.

4575-4585, cf. page 77.

Fouqué II. 178. Niflung, Högne's son, describes the death of the Huns:—

Ich sah vom nahen Fels
 Durch die vielfach gewölbten Bogenfenster.
 Erst merkten sie der Flamme Wachsen nicht,
 Die Zehenden, und sangen kecken Muth's
 Von Atli's Thaten manch ein preisend Lied,
 So dass es fast beweglich war, zu schau'n
 In solcher Lust so hilfeloſe Opfer,
 Dann, als der Rauch durch ihre Säle drang,
 In dem Geleit hellsprüh'nder Feuerfunken, —
 Da fuhr'n sie auf, und nach den Thoren hin, —
 Zu spät. Hell brannten schon die ficht'nen Pforten,
 Die Brücken über tiefe Gräben hell,
 Und mehr und mehr zusammen brach der Bau.

Am Fenster, angstverzerrten Angesichts,
 Schon von der Gluth versengt, drängten sich Viele —
 Umsonst. Es bot die schroffe Tiefe nicht
 Des Ausweg's dar. — In der Verzweiflung d'rauf
 Stellten sie in der Halle Mitten sich,
 In einen furchbar'n Kreis allsamt vereint,
 Und Einer warf sich in des Andern Schwerdt.
 So fielen sie, der Angst des Flammentod's
 Entrissen.

4653-4655, cf. page 123.

Fouqué I. 191. Guttorm.

wenn gleich darnach

Der Mond aufgeht roth über'n Bergwald her,
 Und Nachtgespenster auf Gewitterwolken
 Durchreiten das schweflichte Himmelszelt. —

* * * * *

Blutig und gülden scheint der Mond! Gut Zeichen
 Für mich!

3. GEIBEL

Emanuel Geibel and Hebbel were at work upon their Nibelungenen dramas at the same time, although Geibel's "Brunhild" appeared five years earlier, in 1857. We have the authority of Kulke for the following anecdote: Hebbel, in the course of a conversation with Hanslick, said that he was contemplating a dramatic rendering of the Nibelungen. Upon hearing this, Hanslick exclaimed: "So the ill-luck has come," and, in explanation, added that he had recently visited Geibel in Munich, and that the latter had told him that he was writing a dramatic work on the Nibelungen, but had enjoined upon him the greatest secrecy lest Hebbel should learn of it, for Hebbel was capable and would take the matter in hand himself. "Well," added Hanslick, "I have not abused Geibel's confidence, but if ill luck is to come, it cannot be prevented."¹

In 1852, while in Munich, Hebbel had made Geibel's acquaintance, though the relations between them never grew to be cordial. At this time Hebbel expressed to his wife his surprise at Geibel's modesty, in declaring him Germany's only dramatic poet.² But his usual tone in speaking of Geibel as a

¹ Kulke, 56 f.

² Nachl. I. 387; cf. II. 126 f.

lyric poet was one of contempt. He calls him a poet of many editions and describes at length the methods by which he arranged to give the impression of great popularity.¹

Geibel's play only aims to deal with that part of the saga which contains the love problem of Brunhild and Siegfried. He omits Dankwart, Rumolt, Gernot (who is away), Ute (who has died during the previous year), and all of the new characters in the second part of the *Nibelungenlied*; he adds Hunold, a warrior, who is mentioned in the *Nibelungenlied* as chamberlain to the Burgundian kings, and, as inventions of his own, Sigrun, a priestess in Brunhild's following, and Gerda, Chriemhild's playfellow. The drama deals with the events from the morning following the double wedding to the death of Siegfried, and covers a space of six days. In scope it thus includes less than ten cantos of the *Nibelungenlied*. The entire action is based upon purely human motives, with a background of heathen beliefs and customs. The deceit in the wooing was accomplished by the exchange of armor while Siegfried was supposed to be away on a bear-hunt. Siegfried's second assistance is given with great readiness, although it is first proposed by Gunther:—

Für mich der Kampf, für Dich des Kampfes Frucht;

and Gunther agrees to lead him when the moon is low.

After the second combat, Brunhild chafes against the shame and woe of loving one man and belonging to the other. Chance had cast the dragon-slayer on her coast, and after his departure Sigrun had told that he alone should conquer her. With such thoughts of anger and despair in her heart, Brunhild finds Siegfried and Chriemhild, when the latter is in tears because Siegfried will not explain his absence the night before. Incensed at Brunhild's scornful attitude towards Chriemhild, Siegfried is ready to tell the secret of the wooing, but Brunhild has noted the tears which seem to her to betoken unhappiness, and she becomes more and more convinced that Siegfried really loves her, in spite of the fact that he is married to Chriemhild:—

¹ Cf. Kulke 56; Tgb. IV. 5491; Bw. II. 115; Nachl. II. 29; W. VI. 353; Auf einen viel gedruckten Lyricus; VII. 344.

In the same year, Hebbel wrote to Kuh his indecision as to whether he should finish his "Nibelungen" or "Demetrius," and he declared that Geibel had not shattered him with his "Brunhild," although he could not but admire the magnificent manner in which he had exercised his rights as poet, and marvel at seeing that the old poem, with its grim heroes, only existed for him as a thousand-year-old oak for a maker of fancy articles, who has secured it for himself at a bargain.¹

In the *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung*, May 15, 1858, appeared his first published word on the work.² He notes that Geibel broke absolutely with the myth, and threw overboard everything reminding of it. But he finds the manœuvre unsuccessful, for, though the magic cap and the dragon are put aside, Brunhild is left behind with her gigantic strength, and she conducts herself like a whale that is among flowers and butterflies, while it should be playing with the seals and the sharks. This manner of dealing with the old saga is directly opposed to Hebbel's point of view. For him the peculiarity of its charm lies in the mingling of the marvellous and the purely human. And if one wants to lower this bloody fable to the court history from which it may readily have been developed, why use the names at all? Thus one cannot think of Hagen complaining that he has been deposed and comparing himself to an old dog, although one would sympathize with a dismissed court marshal who had a similar grievance. Hebbel concludes his criticism with the following words: "The piece is therefore to be designated as an absolute failure, so long as it is regarded as the third noteworthy attempt to raise the magic gold of the Nibelungen hoard; but otherwise it is in no way inferior to the poet's König Röderich, and is just as rich in graceful thoughts, tender fancies, and charmingly finished pictures. The statement is not necessary that with such a blunder in the material as a whole, absolutely no conclusion is reached for the literary question."

In February, 1858, Hebbel sent to Gutzkow the epigram, "Einsprache aus München," but recalled it two days later

¹ Bw. II. 126.

² W. XII. 164-167.

in order not to appear as though he had written it in spite. It was not published until 1863.¹

As an actual source of Hebbel's work, Geibel's "Brunhild" is of no real importance. In the first place, Hebbel had completed "Der gehörnte Siegfried" and "Siegfrieds Tod" early in the year in which "Brunhild" was published, and there is no reason to suppose that he knew more than the two scenes of Act IV. before that time. Then, too, Geibel, like Raupach, had dealt too harshly with his material, and unlike Raupach, he had not written a stage play, though Geibel's popularity caused the piece to have a certain theatrical success which, at least in Dresden and Munich, seems to have temporarily prevented the success of Hebbel's trilogy.² The very few passages which might indicate a borrowing are the following:—

2795 f. Gunther.

Mein Weib! Ja wohl! Sie ist so weit mein Weib,
Als sie mir wehrt, ein anderes zu nehmen.

2831 f.

Du magst Dich freuen, Gerenot, Dir ist
Die Krone der Burgunden schon gewiss.

Geibel IV. i. 69.³

Ein heiter Glück erwart' ich nie von ihr.

2800–2803, cf. page 73.

Geibel IV. ii. 72. Hagen.

Erst heut aus dieser Starrheit fuhr sie auf
Und rief nach Wein, und sog aus tiefem Becher
Den Trunk mit bleichen Lippen durstig ein.

3119–3121. Ute.

Wenn Dich als Kind im Traum
Das wilde Einhorn jagte, oder auch
Der Vogel Greif erschreckte.

Geibel II. i. 21 f. Brunhild.

Stoltz und unantastbar
In meines Wesens Blüte fühlt' ich mich,
Dem Einhorn gleich, das kühn den Jäger höhnt.

4480–4490. Hagen.

Er hätt' mich auch wohl nicht geliebt, wenn ich
Erschienen wäre in den Niederlanden,

¹ *Orion* I. 6, 463; *W.* VI. 452; cf. *Bw.* II. 126 f.

² Cf. *Bw.* I. 444, 457; II. 514, 524, 597; *Nachl.* II. 275.

³ References are by act, scene, and page to Geibel's *Gesammelte Werke*, Dritte Auflage.

Wie er in Worms bei uns, mit einer Hand,
 Die alle uns're Ehren spielend pflückte,
 Und einem Blick, der sprach: Ich mag sie nicht!
 Trag einen Strauss, in dem das kleinste Blatt
 An Todeswunden mahnt, und der Dich mehr
 Des Blutes kostet, als Dein ganzer Leib
 Auf einmal in sich fasst, und lass ihn Dir
 Nicht bloss entreissen, nein, mit Füßen treten,
 Dann küsse Deinen Feind, wenn Du's vermagst.

Geibel II. iv. 34. Giselher.

Der Ruf des Volks verkündet's dir: dein Siegfried.
 Er zwang sie alle nieder in den Sand,
 Zuletzt auch Hagen, den ich kaum im Leben
 So furchtbar sah, so wuterfüllt wie heut.
 Das war ein Schauspiel, wie die beiden rangen!
 Der eine grimmig keuchend, blutigrot
 Das Aug' umlaufen, doch der andre selbst
 Im höchsten Kampfsturm heiter noch und schön.
 Da ward mir's klar erst, was jüngst Siegfried meinte,
 Als er im Scherz mit Hagen sich verglich,
 Ihm hilft der Erdgeist, sprach er, mir die Sonne.

v. 37 f. Siegfried.

Nun, diesmal ward mir's schwer genug gemacht.
 Der Hagen ist ein sturmgewalt'ger Fechter;
 Das Schwert gehorcht ihm wie ein Glied des Leibs.
 Und wie er ficht, so ringt er; seine Sehnen
 Sind biegsam Erz. — Fast thut mir's leid um ihn;
 Er ging ergrimmt und ohne Gruss davon.

Giselher.

Man sah's ihm an, er hatt' auf Sieg gehofft.

* * * * *

Siegfried.

Geh, Schwager, nimm den Speer und bring ihn Hagen
 Und sag, ich bät', er möcht ihn nicht verschmähn;
 Die starke Waffe zieme ganz dem Arm,
 Der mir's so schwer gemacht, sie zu gewinnen.

4545 f. Dietrich.

Mir schien sie immer eine Kohle,
 Die frischen Windes in der Asche harrt.¹

Geibel IV. i. 70. Gunther.

Wahrlich, sehn die Weiber
 Uns so verbunden, sie besinnen sich
 Und wie ein Funk' in Aschen stirbt der Zwist.

5069-5072, cf. page 97.

¹ This, however, is a favorite figure with Hebbel; cf. Nn. 1034 f., 4080 f.
 Bw. II. 306.

Geibel III. vii. 62. Chriemhild.

Einen Spiegel zeig' ich dir,
Dass du die eignen Königsehren drin beschau'n
Und dann, dem Basilisken gleich, zerbersten magst.

5284-5288, cf. page 96.

Geibel III. vii. 62. Brunhild.

Und stöhnst du wie ein blutend Reh um Gnade nun?

Scarcely even in minor suggestions can Hebbel be shown to have borrowed from Geibel's play, which sacrifices the whole for a small part, a mode of procedure in direct opposition to Hebbel's attitude. Hebbel alone of these three playwrights was concerned for a truthful rendering of the whole saga, as it is contained in the *Nibelungenlied*. Raupach sacrificed to the footlights, to startling effects; Geibel to beauty, to an intensifying and deepening of one psychological problem, rather than to a representation and motivation of the whole problem. Both Raupach and Geibel trivialize in their efforts to humanize; they take away the grandeur of the old heroic figures and leave us substitutes unworthy the names they bear.

4. WAGNER

Richard Wagner was drawn to the *Nibelungen* saga as a subject for his musical drama through studies which centred about the person of Frederick Barbarossa. These studies led him to cast aside the possibility of making the German emperor the hero of a great opera, but caused him to see the significance and importance of the story of the hoard, and to believe in its historical relation to the great Frankish kingdom. In 1848, he set down the results of these studies in his essay, "*Die Wibelungen. Weltgeschichte aus der Sage*,"¹ and in the same year he wrote his plan for a drama from the *Nibelungen* myth.²

Wagner was arriving at an attitude of conscious critical

¹ Ges. Schriften, II. 151-199.

² "Der *Nibelungen-Mythus*, als Entwurf zu einem Drama," Ges. Schriften, II. 201-214; cf. "Eine Mittheilung an meine Freunde," 1851, Ges. Schriften, IV. 285-418.

clarity towards his art, and Siegfried appealed to him as the purely human hero who was a fitting subject for the musical drama, while he cast aside Frederick as the historically formal hero unsuitable to be an exponent of the new theory which he had formed. Between the first plan of 1848, and the actual writing of the text for his great tetralogy, Wagner reached final certainty as to the theory and philosophy of his dramatic composition; and he expressed his views on the subjects of "Art and Revolution," "The Art Work of the Future," and "Opera and Drama,"¹ before he gave to the world his second conception of the dramatic possibilities of the Nibelungen saga. "He had consciously discovered the fundamental law of the word-tone-drama." A comparison of his two conceptions shows the change brought about by his advancing clearness of ideals and of purpose. Music he felt to be the mother of the drama, which is to join and unify all other arts; only through a complete union of music and drama can the action gain freedom; that is, release from all necessity of appealing to abstract reflection.

The problem which Wagner had set himself to solve was: What is the suitable material for the tone-drama, and how is it to be embodied in the language of speech and of music? A few thoughts from his own writings on these subjects serve best to show his critical conclusions in regard to his art. "A subject which is only comprehensible to the intellect, can also only be communicated by the language of words; but the more it grows into a moment of feeling the more decidedly does it need a form of expression which only the language of tone can reach in necessary fulness. According to this, the contents of that which the word-tone poet has to express is determined entirely of itself: It is the Purely Human, freed from all convention." "The highest conceivable effort of the poet is to take the myth, the product of the clearest perceptions of the human race, adapt it to the circumstances of our present lives, and place it intelligently before us in the drama."

The motives, the action, in the ideal tone-drama of Wagner's conscious purposes were to be within, were to be an outgrowth

¹ Written respectively in 1849, 1851, 1851; *Ges. Schriften*, III.

of the feeling; and so the second plan, while retaining the general course of events of the earlier sketch, entirely changes the whole causality and the motivation of the drama. Wagner no longer simply attempts to dramatize the Nibelungen saga as the Norse sources relate it; he places the conflict in Wotan's soul, and the external signs of the conflict are brought out by the curse of love which Wagner himself calls the formative motive up to Siegfried's death. The conflict is between the striving for power, and the longing for love in Wotan. "All combats among men are only reflexes of his own soul struggles, as is also the participation of superhuman beings in these combats."

Although Wagner insisted upon his right to consideration as a poet, yet from the very nature of the complex structure of his music-drama, from the character of his aims and purposes in his conscious composition, the work cannot be judged from the same standpoint as any other modern treatment of the saga, and no discussion of Wagner purely with reference to the text, or solely from the point of view of the music, can be any more adequate or satisfying than would be a stage production of the alliterative dialogue as a play, or an orchestral rendering of the entire musical score without the accompanying words and action.

The object of this short discussion of Wagner's text is to show the difference in the attitude of Wagner and Hebbel towards the saga, and in their treatment of it as dramatic material, and to point out the few hints and suggestions which Hebbel may have taken from Wagner's version. For although the "Ring of the Nibelung" was not published until 1863, the year of Hebbel's death, it was printed by Wagner, in a small edition for friends, in 1853, and became known to the literary and musical world. Hebbel's intimate relations with Liszt and the Princess Wittgenstein, which date from June 1858, when Hebbel had laid aside the composition of the "Nibelungen" after completing "Siegfrieds Tod," would, in any case, bear out the supposition that Hebbel knew the play. But Hebbel himself gives evidence of knowing Wagner's work. The overharsh criticism which he utters against it in a letter

to Julius Campe, must be largely attributed to the entirely different point of view with which Wagner and Hebbel began their undertakings, and to the fact that Hebbel never knew in its entirety the music which was to glorify, and intensify, and expound the lines and the characters. This letter, written while Hebbel was correcting the proof-sheets of his own Nibelungen trilogy, contains his only criticism of Wagner's version: "And with all the modesty which the greatness of the task engenders, we will look down with a smile on Geibel's march-pane and Richard Wagner's crippled piece, however much the factions will bestir themselves for them, for these people have not an idea of the subject, and treat the gods' swine, Särimmer, that fills the gods in Walhalla without dying from it, like a quite ordinary sow."¹ Another letter to Campe, written August 10, 1862, relates an incident which occurred at the home of Frau von Bülow, in Berlin, when he met a certain Herr Klein, who at once greeted him with the words: "Do you know the Nibelungen of Richard Wagner? That you must admire, I say you *must*; that brings one to the point of falling on one's knees and kissing his feet." Whereupon Hebbel answered: "You are not the man to prescribe to me what I shall admire," and turned his back on him.²

But Hebbel found much to interest him in Wagner's theories regarding opera and drama, although he did not accept his principles as a whole. Hebbel himself had considered the possibility of a union of opera and drama in special instances, and always when at work at his "Moloch" he had thought of it in connection with music.³ He agrees absolutely with Wagner in regarding mythological subjects as most suitable for the opera,⁴ and feels that Schumann would have done better in his opera, "Genoveva," if he had used the popular tradition as source rather than the dramas of himself and Tieck.⁵ Hebbel claims, however, that music can only express the general, not the particular, and supports his idea by supposing an imagi-

¹ Nachl. II. 205; cf. Tgb. IV. 6236.

² Nachl. II. 249; cf. also 309, and W. X. 317 f., Aus Wien und Oesterreich, Orion, February, 1863, "On the Valkyrie Ride."

³ Bw. I. 412.

⁴ Tgb. IV. 6099.

⁵ Bw. II. 476.

nary performance of a Beethoven symphony, the audience for which should consist entirely of musicians; each hearer, he declares, would carry away a different impression of the course of ideas in the music.¹ He objects to a comparison of himself with Wagner, in that he, Hebbel, had no intention of preaching a new gospel, but only wanted to restore to its right the old gospel drawn from Sophocles and Shakespere. Wagner, on the other hand, had hatched out an art theory in absolute opposition to the great past, a theory which annihilated the very being of art itself, and without question was only to hide its own deficiency, its lack of melody.²

Yet after hearing "Lohengrin," in Vienna, Hebbel readily agreed that its success was doubtless a lasting one, and called the text one of the most excellent, if one regarded it from the standpoint of the music, but declared that the problem of the drama begins where the text stops, in the details, in every verse, as well as in the whole, in the composite organism.³ Hebbel thus distinctly disagreed with Lizst, who regarded Wagner's texts as capable of vying with the drama. They are related to the drama, in Hebbel's opinion, as the general to the particular, and if it were otherwise, they would not admit of music.⁴ The poetically dramatic climax coincides with the musical climax only in the rarest cases, and the object of the poet writing for music must be to let all the moments of feeling have their full value.⁵ For the rest, Hebbel strongly believes in the close relation of the arts, all are only different offshoots of one and the same primal force; he himself always hears music from some unfathomable poetical source, whenever he is at work on an important scene.⁶

Wagner expressed himself as anxious to see Hebbel's "Nibelungen,"⁷ but when he became acquainted with the work, he passed it over with few and slighting words of criticism. In his article, "Über Schauspieler und Sänger," he calls the trilogy a "composite piece" which "immediately gives us the

¹ Tgb. III. 5163.

² Nachl. II. 248; cf. *Bremer Sonntagsblatt*, 1862, article on Hebbel by Adolph Strodtmann.

³ Bw. II. 529 f., 532.

⁴ *Ibid.* 470.

⁵ *Ibid.* 476.

⁶ *Ibid.* 470.

⁷ *Ibid.* 541.

impression of a parody on the *Nibelungenlied*, about in the manner of Blumauer's travesty of the *Æneid*. Here the modern man of letters seems manifestly mocking what he considers the grotesqueness of the mediæval poem by ridiculous exaggerations: his heroes go behind the wings, there perform some monstrous deed of heroism, and return to the stage to tell us all about it in much the same depreciatory tone as Baron von Münchhausen upon his exploits. As all his *dramatis personæ* adopt a similar tone, and thus are really mocking one another, it is obvious that these speeches and narratives are merely directed to the audience, as if each hero wished to let it know that the whole thing was after all a mere paltry thing, thereby meaning not only the *Nibelungen*, but the German theatre itself. And in reality, the whole method of procedure of our 'moderns' in regard to the heroic saga and the theatre as well, should, according to this, be regarded as a farcical attempt, an attempt which neither the well-bred poet nor the actor he has in mind could satirize pronouncedly enough in the exercise of their respective arts. . . . Never does the poet cease to strut as world-saga and get himself displayed as such by his comedians, into whose mouth he drops the deepest-going comments in the very midst of the action."¹ Thus Wagner was as little in sympathy with Hebbel's attempt to place the story of the *Nibelungenlied* before the public as a dramatic unit as was Hebbel with Wagner's endeavors to join the Norse sagas of the gods with that of the gold and its winners, and to give to them a philosophical basis of modern thought.

In selecting and dealing with his sources, Wagner sought to bring the saga elements back to their original mythical basis, and unite them into a dramatic whole; yet his creative fancy often adds absolutely new features and forms scenes and characters which are entirely Wagner's inventions on the basis of the saga material. In certain cases, his text sets forth the original, true significance of a person or a belief. Thus, Hagen is the son of an elf; thus, the gold is originally from the Rhine.²

¹ *Ges. Schriften*, IX. 189-274, Ellis translation, V.

² For a discussion of the two conceptions and a detailed comparison, cf. Nietzsche, *Werke* I., and Chamberlain, "Das Drama Richard Wagners."

Wagner saw the drama in the *Nibelungenlied*, and regarded the epic as composed of a series of fragments of lost *Nibelungen* songs which were pieced together in *Hohenstaufen* times. "Song existed among the people," he says, "as a bodily enacted art work, aided by voice and gesture. These epic-lyrical performances form an unmistakable middle stage between the genuine older lyric and tragedy, and are the normal point of transition from the one to the other."¹ But the story as contained in the *Nibelungenlied* was too imbued with the pomp and pageantry of the Middle Ages, too surrounded by modern notions and sentiments, too modified by the surface influence of Christianity, to offer the simplicity of material which Wagner felt was necessary for the pure music-drama. In his "*Mittheilung an meine Freunde*,"² he tells of his attraction for the *Sigurd* of the Norse versions. Since his return to Germany from Paris, his favorite study had been ancient German lore, which took him back step by step into deeper regions of antiquity, "where at last to my delight, and truly in the utmost reaches of all time, I was to light upon the fair young form of Man in all the freshness of his force." The splendid type of *Siegfried* had long attracted him when he had come to see it in the purest human shape, set free from every later wrapping. And now he first saw the possibility which had not occurred to him when he only knew him from the *Nibelungenlied*. In *Siegfried* he saw the Human Being in the most natural, and the blithest fulness of his physical life, and this elemental hero, this "man become God," the hero whose soul is "free from every guile and glad with love," who is "without flaw and covetousness," he sought to incorporate in his music-drama.

No one source offered the necessary material for Wagner's project, and he borrowed and pieced at will, though always with the view to a composite, unified whole, and to the working out of the fundamental principle which he had invented as a basis. He studied the material from all available sources before he attempted to write, and there is not one of the older versions of the saga which he did not make use of to some extent.

¹ "*Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*," *Ges. Schriften* III.

² *Ges. Schriften* IV., *Ellis* I.

Wagner knew Ettmüller's translation of the songs of the Edda concerning the Nibelungen, which appeared in 1837, and Simrock's translation of both the Eddas which was published two years before Wagner printed his drama. From the Eddas he drew the material which led him to combine the sagas of the gods and the heroes, and make the fate of Siegfried a causal part of the great world-fate. "Rheingold" is based upon a combination of the saga concerning the ring and hoard which is told in the *Skáldskaparmál*,¹ the saga concerning the building of the gods' stronghold contained in the *Gylfaginning* and *Regensmöl*, and the saga of Loki and the golden apples of Idun, which is hinted at in the *Gylfaginning* and told in the *Bragaroeður*. The Norse gods are given German names. Thus we have Wotan, Donner, and Loge; Wotan as the All-Father, Donner as the storm-god, and Loge as the fire-god. Froh is the Norse Freyr; Fricka the Norse Frigg; Freia, a combination of Freyja and Idun; and Erda a combination of the earth-goddess Jörd (of whom no saga is extant), and the Norse Wala of the *Völuspá*.² The names of Guttrune, and of Grimhild, who is only mentioned, are from the Norse versions.

"Die Walküre," while mainly free poetic invention, based upon the *Volsungasaga*, has several suggestions from the Edda. The names of the Valkyries are invented, except that of Siegrune, who is mentioned in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I.*, as protecting Helgi in battle. The *Sigrdrífomöl*, in connection with the *Volsungasaga*, furnishes material for Brunhild's magic sleep, the surrounding flames, and the motive that only the fearless hero shall make his way through them. In the Edda, too, Frigg and Odin contend about their favorites, as in the old saga of the naming of the Langobardians. Fricka's span of rams is a combination and confusion of the attributes of other gods and goddesses. Thor rides with goats, Freyja in a car drawn by cats.

The third opera, "Siegfried," is based more largely upon the songs of the Edda, particularly *Fáfnesmöl*, *Sigrdrífomöl*, *Vafþrúpnismöl*, *Völuspá*, and *Baldrsdraumar*. In the first three of

¹ C. 39-42.

² Vsp. 28, Ls.

these songs are told the narratives of the slaying of Fafnir and Regin (Mimi), the winning of the hoard, the warning and advice of the birds, the waking of Brunhild, and her betrothal with Sigurd, which form the main outline of the story in "Siegfried." The contest of knowledge in Act I., between Wotan and Mimi, where each pledges his head as a wager, is suggested by the incident about which the song *Vafþrúfnesmál* centres. Odin, under the name of Gangrápr (Wanderer), enters into a similar contest with the giant *Vafþrúfner*.¹ In *Völuspó*, we have the wise Wala who foretells future events and the fate of gods and men; in *Baldursdraumar*, as in "Siegfried," Oden wakens the Wala, in order to question her. Wagner makes an absolute distinction between Norn and Wala, which is not to be found in the Edda. The *Ragnarök*, which Wotan fears, and to avoid which he questions Erda, is described in the *Völuspó* and in *Gylfaginning*.

For the title of the fourth opera, Wagner took Simrock's translation of the Norse *ragnarökr*, and for the material he went to the Edda for the account of Brunhild's instruction of Siegfried,² the references to the world-ash *Yggdrasil*,³ to the well of the Norns,⁴ to the lost eye of Wotan,⁵ and to his spear; here, too, he found the suggestion for the spinning Norns casting their cord to the different points of the compass.⁶ The spurious Eddic song *Hrafnagaldur* (Raven-magic), which Simrock includes in his translation, tells how Odin, anticipating the end of the gods, sends out his ravens, and with sorrow awaits their return. Throughout the tetralogy, the idea is conveyed that the race similarity between Siegmund and Siegfried, Wotan and Siegfried, is shown in their eyes.⁷

From Zürich Wagner wrote to Uhlig in November, 1851, asking for von der Hagen's *Volsungasaga*, which he wanted, not in order to mould his composition after it, but in order to

¹ Cf. "Siegfried" I., Wotan: Wand'rer heisst mich die Welt.

² *Sd.* ³ *Vsp.*, Grm., Gl. ⁴ *Vsp.*, Gl. ⁵ *Vsp.* ⁶ H. H. I.

⁷ Cf. "Die Walküre" I., Siegfried III., Wanderer: —

Mit dem Auge,
das als and'res mir fehlt,
erblickt'st du selber das eine
das mir zum Sehen verblieb.

recall again exactly what he had previously conceived in regard to single features.¹ When the book arrived, he looked through it, and found that it was no longer necessary, for he had already clear in his own mind the principal features which he had wished to use and adapt from this most complete of the Norse accounts of the saga. The second opera, "Die Walküre," is based upon a modification of features taken from the Volsungasaga, the only account which gives details of Sigurd's ancestry. Wagner makes Wotan not simply the founder of the race from which Siegfried springs, but that very Walse who is the father of Siegmund and Sieglinde. The incident of the sword thrust into the ash tree and pulled forth by Siegmund is entirely changed in setting, though not in significance. The hints at the wolf-life of Siegmund and his father in the forest are references to the accounts of Siegmund and his son Sinfjötli, who took on the skins and natures of wolves. Siegmund and his sister meet as strangers after she is married to Hunding, the enemy of Siegmund, who is later mentioned in the Volsungasaga, where Siggeir is Signy's husband. Siegfried, instead of Sinfjötli, is the direct offspring of the union of the twin brother and sister, which is with Wagner not the result of a preconceived purpose, but the outcome of fate. The incidents surrounding Siegfried's birth and Brünnhilde's sleep are partly taken from the Volsungasaga, where Siegfried's birth is announced by Siegmund. The cause of Brünnhilde's punishment is disobedience, but here again Wagner strengthens and intensifies the relationship, by making the fight in which Brünnhilde disobeys Wotan the combat between Siegmund and Hunding, not, as in the Volsungasaga and *Sigrdrífomöl*, a fight between the unknown heroes Hjalmgunnar and Agnar.² In "Siegfried," the history of the broken sword, and the test of the sword when it is welded anew, are taken from the Volsungasaga. In the saga, Odin appears to Sigurd with warning counsel before the combat with Fafnir; here, he appears afterwards and only in a last futile attempt to prevent the course of fate.

As in the Volsungasaga, the betrothal takes place by means

¹ Briefe an Uhlig, 118.

² Vs. 20, Sd.

of a ring, and Siegfried rides away in search of adventure. He is made to forget Brünnhilde by means of the magic drink, which, however, in "Götterdämmerung," is compounded by Hagen, and offered by Gudrun. In the Volsungasaga, the effect of the drink gradually diminishes; in the opera, Hagen offers a second drink of remembrance. In the Volsungasaga, Brynhild only recognizes the ring after Gudrun has shown it to her; here, she sees it immediately upon her arrival at Gunther's court.

Von der Hagen's "Nordische Heldenromane," which had been Wagner's authority for the Volsungasaga, contained also a translation of the Thidrekssaga. Chapter 168 relates how Brunhild gave Siegfried the horse, Grani, an incident upon which Wagner has enlarged in the "Walküre." Sieglinde's death in the woods, as well as the finding of Siegfried by Mimi and his education with him, are also incidents based upon this saga, chapters 159-164, where Siegfried's father and mother are called Sigmund and Sisibe, and his foster-father, Mimir. Here, as with Wagner, the scene of the fight with the dragon is laid in the woods.¹ This, too, is the only source which brings out clearly the story of Hagen's birth as the son of an elf,² which Wagner so strongly emphasizes and upon which he so materially enlarges. Once more, Wagner draws in closer union the threads of his plot, by making Alberic the elf who was Hagen's father.

The Nornagestssaga, which was also included in von der Hagen's "Heldenromane," makes Sigurd's foster-father a dwarf.

Golther suggests that Wagner may have used still another Norse source, a Norwegian Skaldic song, written about 900, from which he may have drawn the idea for making Brünnhilde the herald of Siegmund's death.³

Although Wagner based his entire production on the Norse versions, he did not neglect to study the German sources, and drew from them in various isolated instances. For his knowledge of the Nibelungenlied, he again depended upon Simrock's

¹ So also in the "Lied vom hürnen Seyfrid," and in Simrock's "Wieland der Schmied."

² C. 169.

³ Golther, 56.

translation. The names of persons are nearly all taken from the German epic: Siegmund, Sieglinde, Siegfried, Brünnhilde, Hagen, Alberic, Niblung. Wagner has the magic helmet, a reminiscence of the *Tarnkappe* of the *Nibelungenlied*. Siegfried's teasing of Mimi with a bear, on his return from the chase, is a reminder of the incident in the hunt, just before Siegfried's death. The two Niblungs, Alberic and Mimi, watching, in greedy enmity, at Fafnir's hole, recall the contention between the two sons of Niblung over the hoard. Siegfried's invulnerability is here caused by Brünnhilde's blessings, not by the bathing in the dragon's blood; that is, the one vulnerable spot is not the result of an accident provided by nature, but of an intentional act of Brünnhilde. Siegfried's defiant attitude upon his arrival at the court of Gunther,¹ his winning of the ring from Brünnhilde, as the result of a struggle,² Hagen's night watch before the hall,³ Siegfried as the advance messenger from Gunther returning with Brünnhilde,⁴ the hunt on the Rhine,⁵ Guttrune's troubled dreams,⁶ are all borrowings from the mediæval epic. Reminders of the *Nibelungenlied* are found throughout Hagen's attitude towards Siegfried. It is Hagen who knows of him before his arrival, it is he who thinks of obtaining power through Siegfried, it is he who proposes asking Siegfried's assistance in wooing Brünnhilde, it is he who arouses and incites to vengeance against Siegfried, it is his hand that kills Siegfried while the latter is bending over to drink, it is he who attempts to rob as well as to murder.

The "Lied vom hürnen Seyfrid" had been published in von der Hagen's *Heldenbuch*, in 1825, and translated in Simrock's *Heldenbuch* III., in 1844. The name Gibich, which Wagner uses in reference to Gunther's father, occurs in the *Lied* as the name of the king. The entire saga, with the exception of the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Klage*, and *Biterolf*, calls the race Gibichungen, Norse *Giukunge*, from the name of the father. The name *Dankrât* seems a later invention. The test of the sword occurs in this source, as well as in the *Volsungasaga*, Thi-

¹ *Nl.* III.² *Ibid.* X.³ *Ibid.* XXX.⁴ *Ibid.* IX.⁵ *Ibid.* XVI.⁶ *Ibid.* XV.

drekssaga, and Nornagestssaga, and the fight with the dragon in which he first makes use of the weapon occurs, as with Wagner, in the deep woods. The only important feature which Wagner can be shown to have borrowed from this source is his introduction of Siegfried as an unrestrained, violent strippling who knows nothing of father or mother, though in the Thidrekssaga he is also ignorant of his origin.

Of the modern versions of the Nibelungen saga, Wagner knew Fouqué's "Held des Nordens," Raupach's "Nibelungen-Hort," Uhland's poem, "Siegfried's Schwertgewinnung," and Simrock's play, "Wieland der Schmied." The only one of these which had any marked influence upon him was Fouqué's drama.¹ Of the works published after his "Ring," Wagner later mentions in his writings Dorn's opera, Hebbel's trilogy, and Jordan's "rhapsodies." From the prelude to Fouqué's "Sigurd," Wagner took several of the defiant speeches of Siegfried, and the monologue of Mimi which is interrupted by Siegfried's stormy entrance. The opening scene in "Götterdämmerung," with the three Norns, was certainly suggested by the first part of the second Adventure of "Sigurd der Schlangentödter," where the Norns sit about the sleeping Brynhildur and prophesy; from Fouqué, too, are taken Siegfried's words about Grani upon his arrival at Gunther's court. Wagner, like Uhland, opposes the sources in having Siegfried forge his own sword.

Wagner also made use of Grimm's "Deutsche Mythologie," particularly for the formation of names. The cry of the Rhine-maidens, —

Weia! Waga!
Wagalaweia!
Wallala, weiala, weia!

he writes to Nietzsche, he got from the name Heilawac which he found in Grimm; the three names of the Rhine daughters are free formations on the basis of names that he found here. Thus, Grimm cites Wachilt as a nixie's name.

Popular superstition also enters into the elements of the

¹ Cf. A. Lindner, *Deutsche Wochenschrift*, 1884, Nr. 52, and Golther.

composition. Fricka mentions the allurements of the Rhine daughters who entice men to their destruction:—

Schon manchen Mann
— mir zum Leid —
verlockten sie buhlend ins Bad.¹

The magic helmet has the power to transport its wearer from place to place, and to change him into various animals at will, as in *Puss in Boots*; Mimi is forced to tell the truth, as the magic cap in Hopp's farce, "*Doctor Faust's Hauskäppchen*," forces the person questioned to answer without falsehood.² Siegfried awakens his bride with a kiss, as in *Dornröschen*; he casts a piece of turf over his shoulder to signify his disregard for life; and when Hagen attempts to take the ring from Siegfried's hand, the arm is raised threateningly. Wagner gives to the ring certain properties of the *Wünschrute* of Germanic folk-lore:—

Durch des Ringes Gold
errät seine Gier,
wo neue Schimmer
in Schachten sich birgt.³

All of this material Wagner moulded over with free additions and changes in relationship. Perhaps the chief characteristic in his treatment of the saga material is his complete change in the relationships of many of the characters to each other, and in the relation of the gods to men, with the two motives running through the whole: the ruin-bringing curse on the gold, and that theme which is so fundamental a part of all of Wagner's works, the redeeming power of love. What Hebbel drew from Wagner must, of necessity, be small. Each had an entirely different aim and ideal before him: Hebbel, to rejuvenate the old saga as he found it in its youngest complete form; Wagner, to go back to the mythical beginnings, and to reconstruct the saga on the basis of the oldest known forms. A few minor suggestions and an emphasis upon certain phases of the saga material are at most all that Hebbel drew from Wagner's music-drama.

¹ "*Rheingold*" II.

² Published Vienna, 1843.

³ "*Rheingold*" III.

Both Wagner and Hebbel make Alberich the ruler of the dwarfs:—

Die hören auf den wilden Alberich.¹

With Wagner, it is a power that he has won through the treasure and the making of the ring. Hagen calls him:—

Gefallener Fürst!
Nacht-Hüter!
Niblungen-Herr!²

Both poets make clear the fact that one man has Brunhild in his power, to win either for himself or for another. Brünnhilde says:—

In seiner Macht hält er die Magd;
in seinen Banden
hält er die Beute,
die, jammernd ob ihrer Schmach,
jauchzend der Reiche verschenkt!²

In both plays, Brunhild knows that only the strongest man shall conquer her:—

Wer ist der Mann,
der das vermochte,
was dem Stärksten nur bestimmt?³

Frigga feels helpless since the runes have not led her aright. In "Götterdämmerung" Brünnhilde says:—

Wo sind meine Runen
gegen dies Räthsel?

In both dramas, Siegfried arrives at Worms accompanied by his steed; with Hebbel, he at once recounts his deeds; with Wagner, he recites the history of his exploits just before his death. In both dramas, he endeavors to cheer the gloomy Gunther while they are resting on the chase, and in both dramas the birds guide the way to Brunhild:

630 f. Siegfried.

Die Dohle fliegt voran,
Die Eule folgt.

"Siegfried" II.

(Der Vogel flattert auf, schwebt über Siegfried und fliegt davon.)

¹ Nn. 143.

² Götterdämmerung II.

³ *Ibid.* I., Nn. 1653 f.; cf. p. 113.

Siegfried (*jauchzend*).

So wird mir der Weg gewiesen:
 wohin du flatterst
 folg' ich dem Flug!
 (*Er eilt dem Vogel nach.*)

"Siegfried" III.

Mein Vöglein schwebte mir fort; —
 mit flatterndem Flug
 und süßem Sang
 wies es mir wonnig den Weg.

With Hebbel, Siegfried is connected with ravens who appear at crucial times in his life: when the hoard is being brought to Worms, when he is on the chase with Gunther and Hagen; even after his death the raven circles about his grave. With Wagner, two ravens appear in warning on the fatal chase, and as Brünnhilde casts the burning torch upon the funeral pyre, two ravens fly off at her behest to announce to Wotan what has taken place. Neither poet calls the birds that guide Siegfried to Brunhild ravens. In both dramas, the dying Siegfried fails in his attempt to cast his shield at Hagen.

The scene between Ute and Kriemhild, in the early morning after Siegfried's death, may have been suggested by the scene in Act III. of "*Götterdämmerung*," where Guttrune, on the morning after the chase, is disturbed in her slumbers by evil dreams, and by the thought that she hears Siegfried's horse and horn, while she dwells upon her fear of Brünnhilde.

In Act V., scene ix., Hagen takes Balmung from Siegfried's dead body with the same defiance that Wagner's Hagen endeavors to take the ring from his hand.

The continued references to Dietrich's knowledge acquired at the Nixie's well may have their origin in the scenes of the "*Ring des Nibelungen*" where Erda or the Norns appear. Erda, coming from secret depths, instructs and warns Wotan, and the Norns tell of the well of wisdom at the foot of the world-oak. Dietrich's story of the birth of Siegfried recalls the emphasis which Wagner lays upon the fact that destiny has decreed Siegfried and Brünnhilde for each other: —

"Siegfried" III. Brünnhilde.

O wüsstest du, Lust der Welt,

wie ich dich je geliebt!
 Du warst mein Sinnen
 mein Sorgen du.
 Dich Zarten nährt' ich
 noch eh' du gezeugt;
 noch eh' du geboren
 barg dich mein Schild:
 So lang' lieb ich dich, Siegfried!

Possibly we find a reminiscence of Alberich's winning of the hoard from the Rhine daughters in Volker's vision.¹

In "Rheingold," Loge says:—

Ein Tand ist's
 in des Wassers Tiefe.
 "Götterdämmerung" I.
 Die erste Norn.
 das Rheingold
 raubte Alberich einst.

Volker's warning to leave the hoard in the water's depths recalls the closing scene in "Götterdämmerung," where the Rhine daughters regain the stolen treasure. Volker's story, like Wagner's prelude, omits the third god, Hoenir, in the narrative of how the gods secured the gold: Volker says, "Durch Götterraub;" Wagner has, "Durch Raub."

It is quite probable that Hebbel drew from Wagner his idea for making Hagen an elf's son, a point which Wagner strongly emphasizes, and with striking effect, for in the "Ring" Hagen is the connecting link between the Niblungs and men, just as Siegfried is the connecting link between gods and men. With Hebbel, he is the uncle of Gunther, and only in the banquet hall of Etzel does he call himself the son of an elf.

5. VISCHER

A decided influence upon Hebbel's attitude towards his subject, and, in a few cases, a direct influence upon the composition of his drama, are traceable to Friedrich Theodor Vischer.

¹ 4320 f., cf. page 78.

In 1844, appeared Vischer's "Kritische Gänge," the second volume of which contains the essay, "Vorschlag zu einer Oper." Hebbel became acquainted with the work in the following year, and discusses it in a letter to Felix Bamberg: "I read with great interest Vischer's *Kritische Gänge*, which a young doctor brought me. A very able æsthetician who, to be sure, now and then mistakes a purely external for an internal point, as, for example, when he deduces from the impossibility of seeing a political comedy represented at our court theatres, the impossibility of such a comedy."¹ That Hebbel repeatedly read the "*Kritische Gänge*" is shown in his first letter to Vischer, June 1, 1858, which he wrote upon reading his "*Æsthetik*," and in which he says: "Permit me to grasp the opportunity offered by the journey of my friend Kolatcek to approach you also personally, after a union and intercourse of spirit, at least on one side, has long existed. I feel myself all the more impelled to do so, since I have recently been much occupied with your *Æsthetics* and have thereby discovered that the science of art, even though not popular, can still be intelligible. Do not be surprised by the fact that I, who have long since and repeatedly read and studied your *Kritische Gänge* and your other essays, have not until now come to your principal work."²

On the first of June, 1862, he accompanied the manuscript of his *Nibelungen* trilogy with a letter to Vischer, containing the following acknowledgment of indebtedness: "Do not marvel that I am sending you herewith my *Nibelungen* tragedy. Conventionality, which perhaps would have an objection to make, shall not prevent me from performing a sacred duty of gratitude.

"However surprising it may seem to you in the first moment, no one has had greater influence on this poem than you. For years your *Kritische Gänge*, with their splendid essay on the *Nibelungen*, have not disappeared from my desk; for years, this essay, which seemed to me irrefutable, stood between me and my youthful wish, and even though in the end I did not resist, because in such cases it is indeed impossible, still you have had an important influence upon the execution; for if,

¹ Bw. I. 258.

² Bw. II. 490.

as the judgments of Schöll,¹ Hettner,² and others give me cause to hope, I should not entirely have failed in finding the right mean in the principal point between the too much and the too little, and in giving to the forms of our great national epic human entrails, without taking from them their gigantic outlines, I must attribute that in great measure to the force of your warnings and suggestions, which were at first terrifying but later fructifying."³

Vischer's essay begins with the recommendation of the Nibelungen saga and an appeal for a composer worthy of the material, "I should like to attract favor to the Nibelungen saga as text for a great heroic opera."

Vischer's fundamental idea is that art must be based upon history as the real stage of the ideal. Painting has left the world of myth, and is to ascend from thence to the great tasks of history. Poetry is to bring to perfection the political drama. The opera has made sufficient use of the realm of subjective feelings and should proceed to the great objective feelings. The musical world lacks as yet its Shakespere and its Schiller, who could bring the political, the historical drama to its height. We have not yet had the music which such a material demands. The material in the Nibelungen saga, while not really historical, is national, that is the first thing which is to be extolled in it.

"The Nibelungen heroes are real German types of character, such as a people in early times depicts as a mirror of its best moral forces, on the basis of not further recognizable historic features. German gentleness and the feared and lasting German anger, German good nature and fidelity, which declares itself most strongly in the cast-iron consequences of the tragic punishment of infidelity, the spring fragrance of love and the sword-clash of German bravery, tender shyness and stubborn obstinacy, dark defiance, finally, the deep feeling of humanity and fate in which all these definite strains exist as in their element: this is the broad and full breast of our most intimate folk-nature, which in this eternal poem breathes full and sound. These features of our moral folk-world appear

¹ Cf. Bw. II. 285, 392, 510 f., 524.

² Cf. *Ibid.* 391 f.

³ *Ibid.* 493; cf. Vischer, 406.

here, however, in the simplest conditions, with the most untainted moral concepts, in that unbroken and unmixed originality, whereby these forms appear to the eye of modern culture as roughly hewn giant-pictures. Here the question at once arises whether such pictures are capable and worthy of fixing the dramatic interest of an age which has now to produce its effects through a deeper, more complex world, and which is therefore no longer served by such simplicity. . . . Certain it is that through the great alienation of time and custom, the material has become quite unsuitable for the pure, non-musical drama. . . . It is not a question of the dramatic action of the fable, but of the subjectivity of the characters. Give to these men of iron, to these women of gigantic mould, the power of oratorical expression which the drama requires, the sophistry of passion and reflection, the capacity of explaining, justifying, and doubting their intentions, which is absolutely necessary for the dramatic character, and they are undone; their greatness is so inseparable from their laconism, from their depth pressed back in silence into themselves, from their crudeness, that they cease to be what they are, and yet do not become something else which could please and move us."

That Hebbel felt the direct force of this warning is shown in his own words to Vischer, and in a letter to Hettner, December 8, 1861: "During the work I have had to cast nine-tenths of my best thoughts overboard, and that is not particularly easy, because the dramatic thought differs from every other, even from the poetic thought in general in that, once cast aside, it can never again be utilized, and the gleaming gold-fish, once released from the net, returns to the depths forever. I am really proud of much that is stiff and awkward, for example, of Siegfried's wooden wooing, which would be unbearable and mistaken, if it were not conditioned by the style of the whole; but it was the very alpha and omega of the task to provide the monstrous figures with human organs without depriving them of their magnificent outlines, and if that were to be accomplished everywhere, it could only succeed through severe and rigorous treatment."¹

¹ Bw. II. 391.

Vischer emphasizes the desirability, however, of making this material appeal to modern feelings without sacrificing the characters. "We need more than the Nibelungen; for the problems of our times we can learn nothing from them immediately, they are not in the least political, a family and vassal history on a grand plane, that is all, but in this simple history the eternal fundamental feelings of the heart speak so strongly that this draught of spring water cannot fail to be extremely wholesome for us. . . . Self-portraiture is the unavoidable leprosy of a time of cultivated subjectivity; it can be only beneficial for us to see once again human beings without any."

The great advantages of the material for a musical drama are its very simplicity and crudity, in that the music can soften these elements and enrich and enlarge the simple world of feeling of these silent, rude heroes and heroines, without bringing them into the sphere of clear self-consciousness. Again, the opera may have greater stage magnificence than the drama, so that the opportunity could be taken for representing the pomp of the age of the tourney and the Minnesinger; a moderate mixture of the marvellous is the third advantage. Vischer's suggestion is to confine this mythical element to the prophecy of the mermaids, and he advises going back to the original curse in the Edda. The treasure must only be made use of as a motive of renewed injury, when Hagen buries it in the Rhine, and the dwarfs and giants as guardians of the hoard then naturally disappear also. Brunhilde must be a human woman, as in the Nibelungenlied, but her virgin defiance and the deadly contests may remain as a reminder of the older Valkyrie-form of the saga. Sigfried may also have his *Tarn-kappe*. Vischer thinks through this moderate mixture of the wonderful to gain pure humanness of the motives, and yet to retain the ominous element and the atmosphere of old German heathendom.

After emphasizing these advantages of the material, Vischer dwells upon the two great difficulties: the unclearness of motives, and the epic massiveness of the material, the first of which he considers by far the more important. The Nibelungenlied leaves the real source of Brunhild's hatred for Sieg-

fried untold. Yet the account in the Edda cannot be used, for the magic potion would lead one too far and a mere narration of the scene would be too unclear. Neither can the account in the Nibelungenlied be fully employed, for the night-struggle cannot be made use of. Yet he thinks that a spirited recitative might narrate how Sigfried with his *Tarnkappe* helped to win Brunhilde; for the rest, the Nibelungenlied might be followed, in that Brunhilde has a dark presentiment, and a deep, hidden love for the man who, if her presentiment be right, has so terribly deceived her. Hagen fosters her anger from motives of loyalty to Gunther, whose majesty is overshadowed by Sigfried's bright superiority. In the quarrel scene, Chriemhilde may show a ring which Sigfried had pulled from Brunhilde's hand in the struggle, and had later given to Chriemhilde, and she may express the suspicion that Brunhilde had secretly given the ring to Sigfried and only followed Gunther in order to win Sigfried's love. Thus Brunhilde learns of the deceit, Hagen fosters her passionate hate, and the two determine upon his murder. Sigfried's guilt thus rests in not fulfilling the sacred duty of silence.

The difficulty in the epic mass of the material might be overcome quite as the Greeks could work over their epic into dramatic brevity. Shakespere compresses the wild masses of confused Civil War, and Schiller the floods of the Thirty Years' War, within dramatic confines. The chief difficulty arising from the epic lies in the last bloody combat, in which such large numbers of people take part according to the Lied. Vischer's suggestion is to portray this struggle in a few principal situations, and to force the great noise of combat into the background.

Then follows a plan for the entire five acts of the opera, the first two acts portraying Sigfried's fate and acting as an exposition for the final bloody catastrophe. The first act begins with Gunther's arrival from Iceland with his bride, thus cutting out practically the first nine cantos of the Nibelungenlied. Chriemhilde's secretly cherished love for Sigfried, and Brunhilde's ominous suspicions of deceit and feelings of love for him come to light at once, as do Hagen's hatred of

Sigfried, and the union of Brunhilde and Hagen in their feelings towards him. The second scene brings the confession of love between Sigfried and Chriemhilde. Sigfried, without any hesitation, tells Chriemhilde of the combat and gives her the ring. Chriemhilde recalls the war with the Saxons, depicts her anxiety, and confesses how she secretly inquired of the messengers who brought the first news of the victory. Sigfried tells her that Gunther has promised him his sister as reward for his assistance.

Scene iii. brings the bridal procession; Sigfried reminds Gunther of his promise, and the betrothal takes place. All rejoice, except Brunhilde, with her hatred born of slighted love, Hagen, with his jealous zeal for his sovereign's supremacy, and Gunther, with his dissatisfaction at not having won Brunhilde himself, and his dim presentiment of her love for Sigfried.

In scene iv. immediate preparations are made for the double wedding, without a change of scene being necessary. Brunhilde breaks forth in scornful speech to Chriemhilde, placing Sigfried far below Gunther. Chriemhilde retorts in anger, denies her the right of precedence in entering the church, and after long quarrelling makes her awful accusation, and shows the ring. Brunhilde is speechless, but for the time unpleasantnesses are laid aside and all enter the church except Hagen.

In scene v. the church music is heard during the pauses of Hagen's reflections, in which he already harbors thoughts of murder. The procession returns. Vischer omits entirely Sigfried's denial of Brunhilde's angry charges. Brunhilde hastily turns back, followed by Gunther, and all three determine upon Sigfried's murder, as in the poem. Vischer omits the vacillating Gernot, as well as the pretended war with the Saxons. Only the hunt and the run to the spring are planned. Vischer also insists upon omitting the cross sewed by Chriemhilde to Sigfried's garment, because the mythical feature of Sigfried's skin of horn, which is only vulnerable in one spot, is not suitable for the opera.

Act II., scene i., brings the parting before the chase, in which Chriemhilde in vain seeks to dissuade Sigfried from the expedition by relating her two dreams. This scene would practi-

cally be a dramatization of stanzas 926 to 933 of Canto XVI. Scene ii. shows a forest with a spring. The hunters arrive, and Sigfried is greeted as the boldest and most fortunate of all. Instead of introducing the motive of a lack of wine, Vischer has Hagen anger Sigfried by the assertion that he must show himself first in running, since he was so quick on horseback, and he thus motivates the contests to the spring. While Sigfried, victorious and weaponless, drinks, Hagen stabs him. As in the Lied, Sigfried fells Hagen with his shield, and then sinks down among the flowers. The dead body is found at Chriemhilde's door by her chamberlain, and the remainder of the act shows Chriemhilde's mourning, and her certainty of Hagen's part in the deed.

Act III. depicts the ceremony of the ordeal of the bier within the cathedral. Gunther half confesses his share in the murder, but refuses Chriemhilde's demand to punish Hagen, on the ground that he cannot do without his best vassal. After the funeral rites are over, Hagen persuades Gunther to gain possession of the hoard and sinks it in the Rhine, in order to prevent Chriemhilde from purchasing vengeance by generosity. Immediately after Chriemhilde has learned of this robbery, Rüdiger comes bringing news of Etzel's wooing, and wins her hand by the promise of revenge. Hagen understands her willingness, but is ready for whatever the future may have in store for him.

The fourth act closely follows the Nibelungenlied from the reception of Kriemhild's messengers, Canto XXIV., to her final decision to spare neither friend nor foe, and her promise of Nudung's widow to Blödelin as a reward for his pledged assistance. The five scenes include the incidents with the mermaids and the boatman, the reception at Bechlaren and betrothal of Giselher, and the reception in the land of the Huns, the oath of friendship between Hagen and Volker, their holding of the watch through the night, and the scene between the two and Chriemhilde: "How they did not arise before the queen."

Act V. depicts the final catastrophe, beginning with the banquet scene and Dankwart's entrance in his bloody armor,

following the *Nibelungenlied* with respect to the part taken in the combat by Rüdiger and Dietrich with his men, the separation of Gunther and Hagen as prisoners, Chriemhilde's final demand for the hoard, her appearance with Gunther's head, and her slaying of Hagen. Vischer departs from the *Nibelungenlied* in making Dietrich give the sign which causes Hildebrand to kill her. Dietrich's closing words depict the bloody course of fate which has taken its way through the whole action.

Hebbel accepted several of Vischer's suggestions, and it is evident from his own statement that he carefully weighed every difficulty set forth by the æsthetician.

Hebbel's conception of Brunhild is based upon Vischer's suggestion to make her a human woman with reminders of her early origin. The presentiment of Brunhild which Vischer insists upon is in part transferred by Hebbel to the character of Frigga, who both before and after the contests realizes that all is not as it should be.¹

Vischer suggests omitting both giants and dwarfs. Hebbel introduces the dwarfs alone.² Hebbel omits the first night's struggle entirely, and the second one, except in a few hints.³ Hebbel has constantly emphasized Siegfried's guilt in not maintaining silence, though the reason for his fault is placed in the frank openness of his nature:—

Auch dafür konnt' er Nichts,
Dass ihm der Witz gebrach, sich auszureden,
Er ward gewiss schon beim Versuche roth.⁴

Hebbel early introduces the hoard into the exposition of the play, but he adapts Vischer's idea of letting it play an active rôle only as it forms the cause of renewed injury to Kriemhild.⁵ He retains the prophecy of the mermaids, though he does not introduce them upon the scene, nor does he confine the mythical element to them.⁶

3327 f. Volker.

Ist Kriemhild

Noch immer traurig?

¹ Cf. S. T. I. ii.; II. vi.

² S. T. II. vii.

³ S. T. II. viii.; III. iii.

⁴ 1905-1907; cf. 2078-2081 (quoted p. 178), 2425 f., 2434-2439, 2464.

⁵ K. R. I. ii., III. vii., IV. vii.

⁶ K. R. II. i.

Vischer 426. IV. iv. At the reception of the Burgundians by Dietrich, he answers:—

“auf ihre flüsternde Frage, ob Chriemhilde noch immer den Siegfried beweine, mit einem bedenklichen, warnenden Winke.”

K. R. IV. i., iii. Vischer suggests placing the scene, Av. 29, “Wie er niht gên ihr ûf stuont,” after the scene, Av. 30, “Wie si der Schiltwaht pflagen.” Hebbel combines the two scenes by including the incident with Kriemhild within the compass of the larger scene. He thus accepts Vischer’s suggestion of having Hagen’s arrogant conversation with the queen form the last stage before the final catastrophe. Hebbel has also accepted Vischer’s suggestion to have Volker and Hagen repulse the first band.¹

2161-2163. Hagen.

So sage ich Dir Eins:

Sie liegt in seinem Bann, und dieser Hass
Hat seinen Grund in Liebe!

Vischer points out that the fragmentary account of the relations between Siegfried and Brunhilde, as related in the Nibelungenlied, cannot be used, and that the Eddic loye potion is also not to be thought of, yet Brunhilde’s nature must be filled with love for the man who deceived her. Hebbel says of his Brunhild that her whole being is love for Siegfried, and though this fact is only once brought to actual expression by Hagen, it is none the less to be regarded as the actuating motive of the Brunhild at Worms.

K. R. V. Volker.

(Vor dem Saal. . . . Er ist rings mit Amelungen-Schützen umstellt. Zu dem Saale führen von beiden Seiten breite Stiegen hinauf, die in einem Balkon zusammenstossen.)

Vischer, 431, V. ii. “It is self-evident that the prolonged and constantly renewed turmoil of physical combat does not belong on the stage, and that it is to be reduced to a few principal situations. Hence the opera presents only one portion of the combat to immediate view in the previous scene” (that

¹ 4287 f., 4342 f.

is, directly after Etzel's departure); "the remainder requires another arrangement which is so constructed that only the noise of the conflict is heard from afar. Hence Iring's fight is omitted (Av. 36), and only the most important scenes are emphasized, Rüdeger's fight, the fight with Dietrich's warriors, Dietrich's victory over Hagen and Gunther. . . . The building in which the Nibelungen lodge and fight is thus in the background, a stairway in two arms leads to its entrance, into it throng those who are to fight with the Nibelungen, and the clashing and raging of the combat is heard as from a portico which is imagined behind the entrance. The Nibelungen cannot venture into the open, because they would otherwise be surrounded and crushed by a superior force.

"Now they stand mocking and challenging on the steps and under the windows."

It will be seen that the creative value of Vischer's suggestions for Hebbel was chiefly in the advice for treating the material as a whole, and not in his actual plan, which, written, as it was, with a thought only of opera and planned by a critic rather than by a poet, was unsuited to Hebbel's needs. It is true that Hebbel in several instances divides his scenes and groups his material according to Vischer's plan, but in most cases such a division of scenes is so obvious when the entire *Nibelungenlied* is to be brought into the compass of a dramatic composition, that Hebbel can scarcely be thought of as borrowing the idea from Vischer.

Besides Hebbel's expressed acknowledgment of indebtedness to Vischer and Hettner, and to Franz Dingelstedt for his suggestion of an added scene in "*Kriemhilds Rache*," we have the assertion of Friedrich Uhl, editor-in-chief of the *Kaiserliche Wiener Zeitung* that it was he who spurred Hebbel to actual work on the "*Nibelungen*."¹ But probably the most important influence from among Hebbel's immediate circle of critic-friends was that of Wilhelm Gärtner, for Hebbel acknowledges hints from him for his "*Gyges*," and from the very nature of Gärtner's interests and occupations, as well as from the fact that they were much together during the summer of

¹ *Deutsche Dramaturgie*, I.

1855, at Gmunden, they must have discussed the subject. In 1853, Gärtner lectured at the University of Pest on the Nibelungenlied, and, in 1857, he published his work, "Chuonrad, Prälat von Göttweih und das Nibelungenlied," in which he contends for the unity of the epic and criticises it with an eye of true scholarship that Hebbel knew how to appreciate, and which doubtless affected Hebbel's attitude towards the poem.¹

¹ Cf. Werner, "Hebbel, Ein Lebensbild," 326 f., and Hebbel's criticism of Gärtner's book, June, 1863, W. X. 344-350. Hebbel first saw the work in November, 1856; cf. Bw. II. 116.

CHAPTER V

SOME SPECIAL ASPECTS OF HEBBEL'S WORK

I. INVENTIONS

CERTAIN of Hebbel's inventions have of necessity been referred to under his use of the Norse myth and saga and of history and folk-lore. Occasionally these additions motivate and explain, as in the details concerning Siegfried's first visit to Brunhild; sometimes they are evidently intended to add to the mystery and gloom of the atmosphere; in many cases they are minor additions which are sometimes confusing and seemingly capricious. Hebbel's longer inventions, however, are almost entirely added for purposes of motivation, or of character delineation, and particularly for the ennobling of certain characters: those of Kriemhild, Siegfried, Giselher, and even of Gunther and Hagen in the Burgundian group; and of Dietrich, Etzel, and Rüdiger in the Hunnish group.

Thus Hagen's character receives its exposition in the first scene of the Prologue, and is continually expounded and strengthened by minor inventions, as, for example, the comparison which Kriemhild makes between him and Siegfried.

Hebbel explains, also, Siegfried's power over Brunhild, and invents the stories of her origin and Siegfried's to point out their import and their relation to each other. The two mystical visions in the play are pure inventions: Brunhild's, to point out her supernatural gifts and significance; Volker's, to shadow forth in hazy outline the early history of the destruction-bringing hoard, that "mystic, primitive basis of the whole." Brunhild knows faintly of her destiny, while Frigga has a complete though questioningly uncertain knowledge from the runes. Hence, she realizes the deceit as soon as she hears that Siegfried

possesses the hoard and Balmung. Hebbel invents, too, the motivation for Brunhild's non-appearance after Siegfried's murder in her actions following his death.

Practically all the necessary steps for the explanation of the action beyond the relationship of Siegfried to Brunhild are given in the epic, but Hebbel has added or changed a motive here or there which ennobles the characters and makes them more appealing and convincing. Thus Siegfried's brusque challenge to Gunther is explained by the lines: —

Und hättest Du Dein Reich an mich verloren,
Du hät't es Dir zurückgekauft mit ihr.¹

And he eagerly substitutes a challenge to a test of strength by means of games for the proposed contest in arms.

Siegfried's knowledge of the way to Brunhild's castle is explained by the former visit from which he departed unseen, and which thus leaves him without guilt or perfidy towards her; his slaying of Niblung's two sons is also made excusable by the fact that he divided the hoard twice to satisfy their demands, and that they, more angry at the second division than before, rushed at him with drawn swords, while Siegfried grasped in self-defence the sword Balmung which lay among the treasure: —

Und eh' ich's dachte, hatten alle Beide,
Wie Eber, welche blind auf's Eisen laufen,
Sich selbst gespiesst, obgleich ich liegen blieb
Und ihrer schonte.²

Similarly, Siegfried's character is elevated by his unwillingness to assist in the second conquest of Brunhild, and in his yielding only after Hagen's long and urgent appeal. The entire new scene with the girdle, in which Siegfried is forced to tell its secret against his will, because of his former careless haste, and because of his utter inability to be untruthful, explains Kriemhild's knowledge of the mysterious wooing, tells of the knowledge of Siegfried's vulnerable spot, which the Nibelungenlied leaves unexplained, and adds to the exposition of Siegfried's character. Sieglinde, Kriemhild, and Hagen

¹ 513 f.

² 565-568.

understand Siegfried best: Sieglinde and Kriemhild from their love; Hagen from his hate, from the very likeness in absolute unlikeness between their two natures. Together, they give us in a few lines the typical features of his nature. Siegfried repeats the words which Sieglinde has uttered in loving jest:—

Sie sagt, ich sei zwar stark genug, die Welt
Mir zu erobern, aber viel zu dumm,
Den kleinsten Maulwurfshügel zu behaupten,
Und wenn ich nicht die Augen selbst verlöre,
So läg's allein an der Unmöglichkeit.¹

Kriemhild, angered at Siegfried's evasions of the truth, exclaims:—

Ein Mann, wie Du, kann keinen Fehler
Begeh'n, der ihn, wie schlimm er immer sei,
Nicht doch noch besser kleidet, als die Lüge,
Womit er ihn bedecken will!²

while Hagen puts into words the honestly frank simplicity of Siegfried's nature:—

Wenn man durchsichtig ist, wie ein Insect,
Das roth und grün erscheint, wie seine Speise,
So muss man sich vor Heimlichkeiten hüten,
Denn schon das Eingeweide schwatzt sie aus!³

Siegfried's character is ennobled, too, by his gentleness after the quarrel:—

Wenn mich nichts And'res an den bösen Tag
Mehr mahnte, wär' er schon ein Traum für mich:
Mein Gatte hat mir jedes Wort erspart!⁴

The scene between Brunhild and Gunther which follows the girdle episode gives an excellent opportunity to depict the ominous feelings of Brunhild and her desire to be rid of Siegfried and Kriemhild; to see Siegfried humiliated; to have a proof of Gunther's superiority before her eyes, which are already clouded with gloomy presentiments. After the quarrel scene, Frigga is at hand to explain the deceit and prompt to vengeance, the thought of which Brunhild eagerly seizes upon.⁵

¹ 1204-1208.

³ 2078-2081.

⁵ S. T. III. vii., xi.

² 1487-1490.

⁴ 1962-1964.

A good and natural addition is Siegfried's eagerness for a hunt before he learns of the pretended war with the Danes and Saxons. He is desirous of the joy of the chase, and anxious, moreover, to secure the safety of the tenants who are molested by the devastations of the wild animals.¹

Act IV., scenes iii. and iv., expound still further the character of Hagen, his cunning and determined planning for revenge, and the vacillating, hesitating Gunther, who is given the fearful choice between Siegfried and Brunhild, a fact which emphasizes the whole terrible situation, with its necessarily tragic outcome. Giselher is raised to a real character in Hebbel's play, a gracious expression of love and loyalty. The series of occurrences at the end of Act IV., expressing Kriemhild's fears and anxieties, and the attitudes of Giselher and Gerenot and Frigga, have been touched upon. The splendid fifth act of "Siegfrieds Tod" utilizes every opportunity for portraying the emotions which fill Kriemhild's soul both before and after she learns of the murder.

Hebbel very naturally gives Ute the rôle of comforter, while in the Nibelungenlied it is Siegmund who is Kriemhild's counsellor and friend.

The family scene to which we are introduced in the first act of "Kriemhilds Rache" offers us a picture of the discord which has existed since Siegfried's death, and this discord is reflected throughout the entire play, although the old Germanic doctrine of fidelity and blood loyalty relegate it to the background, so soon as danger threatens.

The following scenes, in which Ute, instead of Margrave Gere, goes to tell the news of Etzel's wooing to Kriemhild, are largely inventions: Kriemhild's devotion to her animal pets, her conversation with Ute showing her attitude towards them and towards her son, and whatever details of her life since Siegfried's death were not told in the earlier scenes, but which we need to know for the understanding of her sufferings and emotions. Her discovery of the fact that Hagen is afraid and has advised against the wooing, her renewed attempts to obtain justice from Gunther, all are additions of the poet,

¹ 1789 ff., 2500 ff.

which serve to bring out in ever clearer outlines the developing Kriemhild in her sorrowing love and hatred.

There is much that is new, also, in the scenes at Bechlarn, which present to us in charming detail the naïvely delightful figure of Gudrun, who, for a moment, in her shamefacedness, involuntarily plays the rôle of a deaf-and-dumb maiden, and thus gives Rüdeger occasion to test Giselher's love. They cast a new and lingering light on her betrothal with Giselher, as well as upon the warning of Dietrich. Volker here deliberately plans to win Etzel's most honorable vassal for a friend, and playfully arouses Giselher to the point of declaring the love which has filled his breast since he first saw Gudrun. Hagen, too, indicates his growing presentiments, and Rüdeger his absolute innocence of intention to do wrong to any Burgundian.

The third act brings Kriemhild's renewed promises of reward to the two minstrel messengers, by which she has won their services, and repeats the expression of her desire for vengeance, but on Hagen alone. The scene between Kriemhild and Etzel, in which he bids her command as she will in regard to reception and entertainment, motivates the non-appearance of Etzel to greet his guests, which the epic leaves unexplained, and which causes Hagen and Volker to wonder, and to agree that Etzel himself is true, and that he was simply prevented from following his natural inclinations to receive the Burgundians.

Many of the minor additions in "Kriemhilds Rache," as well as such scenes as this between Kriemhild and Etzel, bring out effectually the character of the latter, who nowhere receives such justice as at Hebbel's hands. He is not an ineffectual dummy, but a world-conqueror, whose spirit of fire and blood has been cooled to that of a kind and generous ruler, but whose savage instincts break forth when once he, too, is stung. Absolutely innocent of all knowledge or intention of wrong against the Burgundians, he is yet willing to avenge Kriemhild's sufferings when he sees how matters stand. But even then he is only willing to employ the fair means of open combat, after they are no longer his guests, and he is not aroused from his

endeavors to preserve peace until the slaying of his own son. So in the case of Dietrich, the Christian hero, the entire play teems with lines or scenes which elevate him to a plane where he is worthy to be intrusted with the sword of Fate.

Act III., scene viii., is largely based upon the epic account of Hagen's reception by Kriemhild, but certain significant features belong to the dramatic poet. Upon Hagen's refusal to lay aside his weapons, Kriemhild angrily exclaims:—

Ein Jeder wählt sein Zeichen, wie er will,
Ihr tretet unter dem des Blutes ein,
Doch merkt Euch: wer da trotzt auf eig'nen Schutz,
Der ist des fremden quitt, und damit gut;¹

at which Hagen defiantly asks Rüdeger to present himself to Kriemhild as their "Blutsfreund," and adds:—

Die Hochzeit erst, wenn Du gesegnet hast!

Thus baffled in her first attempt to place Hagen at her mercy, and stung by his mocking deference, she turns to Rüdeger and bids him remember his vow:—

Herr Rüdeger, gedenkt Ihr Eures Schwurs?
Die Stunde naht, wo Ihr ihn lösen müsst.²

Act IV., scene iv., again enlarges upon the character of the chief actors in the tragedy: Kriemhild makes her last vain appeal for justice, and is amazed to see Gerenot and Giselher take their stand with Hagen for life or death, while Hagen and Kriemhild expound their own characters: Hagen in describing his feelings for Siegfried, and in accusing Kriemhild of the greater guilt; Kriemhild, in her description of the horrors of the marriage without love, but with only a prompting thought of vengeance. Here she first sees the necessity of a wider range for her revenge, but she has passed the point of ability to endure, and Hebbel makes her say in parting:—

Und müsst' ich hundert Brüder nieder hauen,
Um mir den Weg zu Deinem Haupt zu bahnen,
So würd' ich's thun, damit die Welt erfahre,
Dass ich Die Treue nur um Treue brach.³

¹ 4100-4103.

² 4123 f.

³ 4514-4517.

A new feature of beauty is the attempt to send Giseler out of danger. Hagen at once advises him to set out for Bechlarn, and Kriemhild, too, attempts to form a plan with Rüdiger for keeping him away from Etzel's court, or at least from the impending conflict. He who remained most faithful to her, who aided her in sending her child to Siegmund, is at last her one concern. Even at the end, she asks: —

Was ist mit Giseler?

And to Hildebrand's answer, "Er liegt," she replies: —

Er liegt? Nun wohl, so ist es aus.

Scene vii., between Etzel and Dietrich, which was added at Dingelstedt's suggestion, brings Etzel to clearness as to the situation, and shows the characters of the bold, defiant Burgundians, while it determines Etzel to take a part in accomplishing Kriemhild's desires. Scene vii. brings Kriemhild's demand of Hagen's head from Etzel. If only he had not hindered, she could have achieved her purpose, but since he overlooks Volker's misdeed, and refuses to allow the tourney, where she had counted on strife, and since he now refuses to comply with her ideas of vengeance, she deliberately lays another and more terrible plan. Scene xviii., between Dietrich and Rüdiger, brings out their hopes and their fears, and symbolically shadows forth the significance of the coming combat in the former's tale of the Nixies.

Act V., scene v., between Dietrich and Hildebrand, is a preparation for the finale, and explains Dietrich's position at Etzel's court. Here we have the Christian hero's view of the right and wrong of the combat: —

Hier hat sich Schuld in Schuld zu tief verbissen,
 Als dass man noch zu Einem sagen könnte:
 Tritt Du zurück! Sie stehen gleich im Recht.
 Wenn sich die Rache nicht von selbst erbricht
 Und sich vom letzten Brocken schauernd wendet,
 So stopft ihr Keiner mehr den grausen Schlund.¹

The burning of the hall is partially motivated by the refusal of the Burgundians to give up the dead Huns, even Etzel's

¹ 5038-5043.

child, while Etzel explains the combat in the hall as taking place at the request of the Huns.

The important place given to the struggle between heathendom and Christianity is treated separately. Here may be indicated the scenes which Hebbel has added to emphasize the rôle of religion in the play: "Siegfrieds Tod," Act II., scene v., between the chaplain and Siegfried, on the subject of Brunhild's baptism; Act IV., scene viii., between the chaplain, Kriemhild, and Ute, in which he expounds the Christian faith; and Act IV., scene ix., first half, where the chaplain further elucidates the Christian precepts, and points to Him who has said, "Vengeance is mine," and to Him who bore much greater wrong and suffering than Kriemhild endures. "Kriemhilds Rache" introduces the wandering penitent, whom Dietrich explains to Hagen in scene xxi.

There is a group of minor additions which may be classed under the head of modern touches; they scarcely add to the motivation, but often lend a charm to the pictures of family life, or an added grace and tenderness to the love scenes. Such are the roguish teasing of Giseler before and during Siegfried's wooing and Ute's motherly reproof, Ute's welcoming words to Brunhild, Gunther's deference to his mother's opinion in choosing a husband for Kriemhild, Siegfried's shy awkwardness before Kriemhild, the tender love-making of the girdle scene, Ute's comparison of Kriemhild to a rose stalk that bears both red and white flowers, Brunhild's change of heart towards Gunther until she learns of the deception, as well as her request to be taken for a child and taught as such.

Of the characters, the only important invention is Frigga, whose part in the tragedy is to point out and explain the mystery of Brunhild's birth and life, to represent the old gods, and to protect as well as supplement her charge. Wulf and Truchs are simply two of the Burgundian knights who are given names to tell of the bringing of the hoard and to offer a suggestion of coming discord. The Pilgrim is rather a symbolic feature than a character, and was suggested by Tieck's account of the legendary knight Guy of Warwick in his "Dichterleben."¹

¹ Tgb. I. 431.

Additions which throw a biographical light upon Hebbel are rare, and centre chiefly about Kriemhild's words regarding her squirrels, which form a memorial to Hebbel's pets.¹ Hebbel's love for dogs, next to squirrels his favorite animals, is also testified to in Kriemhild's praise of the devotion of Siegfried's faithful hound.² Hebbel pays tribute, as well, to his great love for the violet above all other flowers, in the scene welcoming Brunhild to Worms. But few critics have not conceded the charm of the picture where Brunhild discovers for herself the violet and its perfume.³ "Mutter und Kind," the writing of which was in part contemporaneous with the composition of the "Nibelungen," arose to a large extent while Hebbel was picking violets in the Prater. Whenever he had finished a nosegay, he had thirty to sixty hexameters in his mind. In the fourth song, he felt that some of the fragrance of the violet had been distilled into his verses. He also records his joy in discovering these first harbingers of spring, his delight in plucking the first three violets for his wife on her birthday, just as in "Genoveva" Golo picks the first violet to bring to the countess.⁴

Next to violets, Hebbel loved roses, and he employs them in figure and description. Kriemhild's mourning is so great that she avoids every pleasure:—

Und wär's auch nur ein Blick in's Abendroth
Oder auf's Blumenbeet zur Zeit der Rosen.⁵

Her commission to Giselher, to prevent him from being a part of the general disaster, would be to pluck a rose from each garden that he passes and to place the nosegay in her name on the breast of his betrothed.⁶

¹ 2959-2964; cf. Nachl. II. 203; Tgb. IV. 5743; for other references to his squirrels, cf. Tgb. IV. 5726, 5736, 5922, 5928, 5937-5939, 5945, 5968, 6139, 6170, 6214; XV. 18; Bw. I. 346; II. 64, 432, 507 ff.; Nachl. II. 141, 143, 169, 174, 202 f.; W. VI. 434-437; Kulke, 26 f.

² 2967 ff.; cf. W. VI. 408-410; Bw. II. 432.

³ 1133-1145.

⁴ Act II. 1120-1122; cf. Tgb. IV. 5428; Bw. II. 118, 233, 267.

⁵ 2756 f.

⁶ 4631 ff., cf. 1423-1426, 2580-2582, 3332 f., 3619, 4519; Bw. II. 105; Nachl. I. 138; W. VI. 229, 259, 277.

These biographical touches are, however, unimportant minor additions, and do no more than lend a passing gleam of color to the dramatic picture. It is in his treatment of the great problems involved in the subject-matter, in his method of dealing with these problems, that we must chiefly seek the personality and genius of Hebbel. It is this treatment which makes of the trilogy a product of creative literature and not merely a reproduction of old tales in new phrasings. It is true that we see Hebbel's genius in his manner of selection and grouping of material, in his change and addition of motives, but it is in his deepening and intensifying of certain psychological problems, in the treatment of his material so as to make its background a great world-problem, that we see Hebbel, the dramatist of struggle and conflict; the dramatist of woman, passionate, wronged, suffering, atoning. And this treatment must be regarded in the light of Hebbel's other writings, and of his expressed views on certain vital problems.

2. TREATMENT OF WOMAN

In going back to the nebulous world of saga, Hebbel was not, like Fouqué, impelled by the "joy of the Romanticist in his new-found material," he was rather attracted by the problems which he saw embosomed in the dark epic mass of his half-historical, half-mythical, wholly human material; problems which he had dealt with in various forms from his "Judith" to his "Gyges," and which were for him the supreme problems of dramatic as of human interest. In Kriemhild was offered him the opportunity of depicting the supreme struggle of a woman's soul; in the downfall of Burgundians and Huns he saw the opportunity of depicting the supreme religious struggle, a religious struggle that would be partly symbolic, and that would be wholly unconscious in its inward significance to the principal participants, but which would raise the court and family history to a universal drama.

Here, too, he had in the heart of his material that use of the mystical which he considered so important a part of dramatic

production, and which was here so absolutely combined with the human interest. And not only were the problems ready for his moulding hand, but the characters were already drawn; so that his work was not to create characters or even to reconstruct them, but rather to exalt them, while retaining their simplicity, to intensify and to vivify the forms of the epic, to deepen their psychological import, and to give to them dramatic outlines.

Hebbel's work is dramatic

All of these tasks which Hebbel saw for his creative genius in the dramatization of the Nibelungen epic appealed to his peculiar powers of dramatic composition. Woman and the problems evolving out of her relations to man had always formed the centre of his great dramas. The very title of the tragedies: "Judith," "Genoveva," "Maria Magdalena," "Julia," and "Agnes Bernauer," show the position occupied by the heroine almost as clearly as does his choice of material; while his "Herodes und Mariamne" and his "Gyges und sein Ring" revolve equally about the principal woman character as their centre, and "Die Schauspielerin," of which we possess but a fragment, was to have the greatness and the life principle of its heroine arise from the ruins of an unhappy passion. Only his two-act drama, "Michel Angelo," and his unfinished "Demetrius" have the hero as central figure.

Each one of these great women characters depicts in various phases, and under various circumstances, the tragic side of love: Judith, the maiden-widow of wondrous beauty who goes out to avenge her country, and ends by avenging her sullied womanhood; Genoveva, the woman of surpassing charm of person and personality, whose very existence arouses the evil passions of her protector and through him the suspicions of her husband, which form the crown of thorns for her long suffering; Klara, the girl of the people, who, in despair of winning the love of the man who has her affections, yields to the jealous persuasions of an absolutely unworthy suitor; Julia, the girl who has surrendered herself through love to a passionate, unknown lover, whom appearances declare to have deserted her; Agnes, who, by reason of her beauty, is exalted to be the wife of the Duke's son, but who, by reason of her lowly

birth, must atone for her exaltation with her life, offered up for the welfare of the state; Mariamne, the beautiful queen of Herod, whose tragic fate it is to be misunderstood and outraged in her most sacred feelings; Rhodope, the queen of Lydia, whose husband, like Herod, has too great a joy in his wife as a possession, and who must therefore cause his friend to see her unveiled beauty in order that his love may feed on another's knowledge and envy. Injured love, wronged womanhood, outraged beauty, suffering and avenged, these are the themes about which the varied plots of Hebbel's tragedies centre.

The frequently quoted criticism of Laube bears special reference to the position and nature of Hebbel's heroines. "If from the choice of your material," exclaimed the representative of Young Germany, "you were not always obliged to put forth two-thirds of your forces to make the subject palatable, you would overthrow Gutzkow and all of us so that we could never stand up again." When Hebbel, years afterwards, recalled this outburst, in his journal, he added, "The words remained in my memory exactly because I found something true in them."¹

Bamberg, too, after commending "Gyges," and especially Hebbel's treatment of the ring, added, "Another pious wish, my dear friend! Is it then not possible for you, in your later dramas, to lay the main importance of the action no longer in the woman? I should think that you had exhausted the cycle? Make yourself smaller by half, I wager with you that your piece will be played everywhere."² Hebbel was already far advanced in the work on his last complete drama when this suggestion from Bamberg came, and Kriemhild forms a fitting climax in the list of his heroines, for it is in this character alone that we see before our eyes the entire development of love and of character through love, from young girlhood to middle life, from innocent affection to bitterest revenge. In Kriemhild we have the girl made a woman through love, and developing into a demon through constant wrong and denial of justice, a picture of the greatest possible love which is forced to the point where it must wreak the greatest possible vengeance.

¹ Tgb. IV. 609r.

² Bw. I. 341.

In Hebbel's other tragedies, excepting "Agnes Bernauer," the woman is wronged by the man she loves, or to whom she yields herself; in the "Nibelungen," the wrong is done against the one she loves and by those who, because of natural ties, are nearest and dearest to her. Like Hebbel's other heroines, the terrible problems which she has to solve and which lead her on to the abyss of destruction are problems laid before her on the altar of love, problems which arise from the devotion and loyalty in her heart, and to the solving of which she gives her life and soul. All unconsciously and innocently, she is that human woman, "decked with every charm," who enters the lists against the heiress of the gods whom they have wakened to be Siegfried's bride. Kriemhild is preëminently the heroine of Hebbel's drama, as of the epic. As her nature unfolds, as she is so rudely aroused out of the peaceful simplicity of her girlhood, she more and more represents the centre of feeling and action. Brunhild, with Frigga, disappears from the scene after her terrible part has been played in instigating Siegfried's death; Ute is a passive figure behind the scenes from the time of Kriemhild's second marriage; Göteline and Gudrun are secondary characters who serve, as in the epic, to effect the close relationship between Rüdiger and the Burgundians, and who throw a still stronger light upon Kriemhild's marriage with Etzel.

It is Kriemhild alone, of the women of the play, who stands out through the entire trilogy in bold relief, and in continuing evolution. From the moment when she has confidently told her dream to her mother, and when she draws back, red with surprised love, from her first chance glimpse of Siegfried, to the last moments of most terrible abandon of vengeance; from the prologue to the last act, each scene in which we see Kriemhild shows a new step in her development, a new link in the chain of necessity that leads her from the timid girl, with her vow of virginity dying on her lips, from the joyous wife, irradiated by the first happiness of young love, to the pitiless avenger who spares neither friend nor foe. And each step, each stage in the action, represents a new phase of the love which gave itself so fully that only in a life absolutely given over to its claims

and demands can it find adequate expression; a love which, now that its object is dead, must seek satisfaction, — must resort even to the most terrible means to accomplish the retribution which such love requires. Her nature, in the beginning, is just unfolded to the point of readiness for a first great passion, she has a wealth of affection to bestow, and its overflowing tenderness gladly and gently welcomes the new sister, Brunhild, who stands over against her in such sharp, northern contrast.

Out of her absolute confidence in Siegfried, Kriemhild is for a time rudely shaken by the suspicions which the finding of the girdle have aroused in her mind, but the disclosure of the fatal secret fully restores her trust, and it is in the pride and enthusiasm of her love, when it is stung to the utmost by Brunhild's taunts, that she betrays the mystery of the double wooing. It is from the fear growing out of her love that she casts aside all caution in her desire to protect Siegfried, and confides to Hagen the secret of his vulnerability, when he, as she thinks, is about to go to battle; it is this same fear which arouses her direct anxiety when the pretended war is turned into a chase, and he insists upon going. Tormented by terrifying presentiments, she employs every means at her command to urge him to remain, and it is this same fear in love that sends her to her two younger brothers, and begs them to accompany Siegfried; this same fear which anxiously questions them as to Hagen's feelings towards Siegfried, and which keeps her restless during the night, which makes her apprehensively alive to all the stealthy sounds of the return from the chase, and which causes her to divine that the dead man before her door is Siegfried. It is her love, wronged and wounded, that cries out for truth and justice; it is her love which, through the years of her widowhood, makes her tarry at Siegfried's tomb, and avoid every pleasure as though it were a sin; which makes her shun the treachery of her own kind and fly to dumb animals for consolation; which dries the springs of mother-love in her heart until she thinks of her son as born only to slay the murderer of his father.

Hagen's defiance, in the presence of Siegfried's dead body,

from which he takes the famous sword Balmung, his robbery of the hoard, the denial of justice, have only made her hate, rooted so deeply in the wealth of her love, so much the hungrier. But no way opens before her seeking eyes until she learns of Hagen's strenuous opposition to Etzel's wooing; a light breaks upon her, as she exclaims, "He is afraid." Yet even now, with the glimmering vision of the possibility of vengeance, she attempts to bring her brother to perform his duty as judge of the land; as queen of all who have suffered wrong and endured injustice, she once more brings her complaints against Hagen:—

Ich rufe Klage über Hagen Tronje,
Und Klage werd' ich rufen bis zum Tod.¹

And only when her last faint hope of justice is absolutely extinguished, does she take from Rüdiger his oath in his own and Etzel's name, to deny her no service, and give her hand to him for his king. At first she hopes to have Gunther and his following accompany her to the Huns, but since he refuses, she exacts from him the promise of a later visit. Seven years she waits in vain, and each year the hatred born of love is deepened and strengthened by long tending, by the joylessness of her second marriage. Finally she sees no other way than to send for the Burgundians. Even now, she hopes that, surrounded by Huns, the Burgundians may surrender Hagen, and her sole idea is vengeance on him; here King Gunther is free, and if a headsman be found among the Burgundians, she will not need the Hunnish avengers. Even after they show that they have been warned, and defy her by wearing their armor, even then, when she has summoned an army of Huns to accomplish her purpose, she cries to Gunther for the last time for justice, and repeats her complaint against Hagen Tronje. Not until this last refusal does she bid her men surprise the Burgundian servants while their masters are at the banquet; not until Etzel has overlooked Volker's slaying of a Hun does she see him hindering her, and demand from him the murderer's head; not until he refuses to harm any guest, or to allow treachery and duplicity, does she think of the child

¹ 3172 f.

whom she has borne him and whom she cannot love. The dragon sits in its hole and if Etzel will not move until the dragon has stung him, then she must offer the opportunity for a wound. From this moment, absolute abandonment to the thirst for revenge gives rise to the most horrible situations.

She hears of the fallen Hunnish heroes. "But Hagen lives," she cries; "The whole world pays me not for him." Rüdiger begs her for release from his oath which she calls upon him to fulfil; her answer is, "And must I open the veins of the whole world down to the youngest dove still in his nest, I'd shudder not." Hildebrant witnesses and recounts the terrible combat after Rüdiger has entered the hall; Kriemhild herself mounts the steps to see the last appalling struggle: "What could there still be that would terrify me?" she cries. Each horror makes her ready for the next, greater one, each injury prepares her to deal a still harder thrust, until she herself gives command to slay the guiltiest of Ute's sons, until she herself is aroused to the actual deed of slaying Siegfried's murderer with her own hands.

Yet this terrible creature is the very same whose first entrance showed only love and gentleness; every step that she has taken has been one of natural psychological development, and she retains our sympathies to the end, not only through the necessity for the most violent means which is forced upon her by constant denial of justice and assistance, but, as Hebbel said of the Kriemhild of the epic, by the fact that we are made to realize that for each suffering that she imposes her inner suffering is infinitely greater than the physical pain which she inflicts. All of the steps in the development are indicated in the epic, but Hebbel has known how to deepen each psychological moment, to add the minor transition scenes and lines which strengthen the motivation, so that each step is made necessary by the one just preceding.

Brunhild, too, as Hebbel himself said, is all love for Siegfried. Her whole valkyrie nature is consumed, first, by the expectant waiting for the dragon-slayer who comes not, and then by the revengeful love which casts aside all scruples, and resolves on his death rather than his happiness with another.

She is the bride destined for Siegfried by the declining world of the gods. A mixture of norn and valkyrie in her life on the ice-bound island, ~~she is more an invention of Hebbel than any other character given by the epic.~~ Perhaps for this very reason she stands out in less clear outlines than the other principal characters of the play, for Hebbel's use of the mythical in her delineation has sometimes the result of mystifying. She is half-seer, half-Amazon, a step-child of the gods, consecrated by them to the accomplishment of a purpose, to the restoration of a sway which it is beyond her power to recover. It is not such a love as joins man and wife, this love from which has again sprung the deadliest hatred; it is a magic through which her race strives for self-preservation, and which impels her to Siegfried without desire and without choice. Since Gunther has conquered her, she can no longer understand the meaning of things; Frigga declares that she has interpreted the runes wrongly; and Brunhild's first defiant resistance becomes yielding womanhood, when she is convinced that Gunther has really won her. Yet her presentiment of Siegfried's superiority, her natural impulse towards him, makes her demand of Gunther still greater proof of his own supremacy in the slaying, or at least in the humiliation of Siegfried. She cannot free herself from the thought of the dragon-slayer, and it is the same motive which caused her demands from Gunther that inspires the taunting speeches opening the quarrel scene. She feels the mystery concerning the relations between Gunther and Siegfried, Kriemhild and herself. She is like an eagle beating her wings in vain against bars which she cannot see, and when the veil is once rudely torn from the secret, her only thought is the one suggested by Frigga. She cannot regain her lost sway, she cannot win for herself that supremacy over death and the mystery of the stars, that earth-rule, which were to have been hers; but she can avenge herself, and this is her one, all-consuming motive up to the time of Siegfried's death, after which life holds nothing more for her. Robbed of the supremacy and the love which were destined for her, her existence is one of listless, lonely misery and hopelessness; she has no further place among the acting characters for she is neither

desirous nor capable of another act. The mission of her existence was beyond her accomplishment, and she now has no further purpose in life; after Kriemhild's second marriage she has taken up her place at Siegfried's tomb, no man sees her more, but stories are told of how she cowers at the coffin, tears in her eyes, now scratching the wood, now her face, with her nails. What Hebbel termed his most difficult task was the least successful, for Brunhild is the least convincing of the characters; she is too mystical and mysterious to be human, too human, too Amazonian, to be the last heiress of the gods.

3. TREATMENT OF RELIGION

Beside Hebbel's interest in problems of woman and sex may be put his intense interest in religious problems. In every phase of Hebbel's literary activity, this keen and lifelong interest is to be seen: in his letters and journals, as well as his poems and dramas. His correspondence with Friedrich von Uechtritz and with Pastor L. W. Luck in Wolfskehlen contain the most definite and pronounced expression of his attitude as man and poet towards religion. His discussions with Uechtritz led to no more than a "truce" between the old friends in which the latter, as the representative of positive Protestantism, ceased to try to move Hebbel from his stand without the pale of dogmatic teachings.

To Pastor Luck, Hebbel attempted in all honesty to explain his position towards religion; it was not at all a hostile position, as indeed he considered impossible for a poet, it was simply a matter of the relative attitude towards poetry and religion. Both have a common origin and a common purpose, and differences of opinion he believed came from regarding the one rather than the other as the original source. Hebbel decided for poetry. It was not that he thought more lightly of religion, he declared, but more highly of poetry, as the "all-embracing." He believed this to be the only attitude which a true poet could hold, and he attributed the satisfying delineation of the views and feelings of the most ardent believer which is often found in

great poetical works to the same faculty by which the poet is able to depict other feelings and relations of life. It is simply because the secret of life is intrusted to the true poet, because he "instinctively grasps every existence in its fundamentals, and every moment of an existence in its general and specific conditions." The poet is "simply the Proteus who sucks in the honey of all the forms of existence (to be sure, only to give it forth again), but who is not forever held fast in any one form."¹ For him everything is a mystery, and every attempt to solve the world-enigma, a tragedy of thought. As has been seen, Hebbel told Pastor Luck that he had known the Bible by heart from childhood, and he claimed that he knew all the more important church legends, both Protestant and Catholic. "But your religious facts are and remain for me anthropomorphisms."² In the same spirit with these later expressions is the youthful cry of the poet to Uhland: "Poetry is my religion, which leads me to the truth."³

Thus Hebbel, with all his fiery subjectivity as a dramatist, when the construction of his characters was concerned, regarded the great religious problems which he made so controlling a part of many of his characters and plots purely from the outside; as one alive to the great forces set to work by religious belief and dogma, but himself aloof from any positive faith. As one of the great motivating problems of human life and civilization, he set himself to solve it in its various phases, and his earliest letters and entries in his journal show him deep in religious queries and reasonings, while his university days at Heidelberg find him already busy with the idea of embodying religious ideas in his writings. "To write something about religion," he set down in his journal, "how in a child the idea of God, of Christ, of his own Ego, and of humanity have their origin."⁴

Though always personally in this attitude of defence and defiance towards every positive form of religion, Hebbel thus fully recognized the great influence of religion on history and on character, and he loved to choose a religious struggle as a

¹ Nachl. II. 120 f.

² *Ibid.* 136; Tgb. IV. 5847.

³ Bw I. 141.

⁴ Tgb. I. 224.

background for his dramas, to make the outcome a picture of the old giving place to the new.

In his first play, "Judith," which called forth a succession of Biblical dramas, the children of Jehovah are making their desperate struggle against Holofernes, the general of the heathen king, Nebuchadnezzar. The whole undertone of the drama breathes the belief in the God of Judah, who must raise up an instrument to deliver his followers from the hands of their oppressors, a God who causes the dumb to speak forth prophecies, and who only lets the weakest of his people doubt, in the last hopelessness of their desperation. Holofernes thus expresses his heathen idea of divinity: "die Menschheit hat nur den Einen grossen Zweck, einen Gott aus sich zu gebären; und der Gott, den sie gebiert, wie will er zeigen, dass er's ist, als dadurch, dass er sich ihr zum ewigen Kampf gegenüber stellt, dass er all' die thörigten Regungen des Mitleids, des Schauderns vor sich selbst, des Zurückschwindelns vor seiner ungeheuren Aufgabe unterdrückt, dass er zu Staub zermalmt, und ihr noch in der Todesstunde den Jubelruf abzwingt?"¹

The Hebrews appear to the army of Holofernes a mad race who "worship a God whom they can neither see nor hear, of whom no man knoweth where he dwelleth, and to whom they yet bring sacrifices. . . . This people is low and unworthy, when it goes forth with spears and swords, the weapons are in its hands mere playthings, which its own God breaks in pieces, for he will not that it fight and stain itself with blood, he alone will destroy its enemies. But terrible is this people when it humbles itself before its God, as he commandeth, when it casts itself on its knees and strews its head with ashes, when it cries out lamentations and curses itself; then it is as though the world becomes another world, as though nature forgets its own laws, the impossible is fact, the sea divides, so that the waters stand firm on both sides like walls between which a street passes, bread falls from heaven, and out of the desert sand springs forth a cool drink."¹ This is the account of the Jews and their religion which Achior, the captain of the Moabites, gives to Holofernes; his advice is to inquire whether this people has

¹ Act I., W. I. 10 ff.

sinned against its God; if so, that God will surely deliver them into the hands of Holofernes; if not, then it were better for Holofernes to turn from the city of Bethulien, for their God will protect them, and Holofernes and his army will become a scorn and a derision to the whole land.

In sackcloth and ashes, Judith awaits a message from God to show her the way to deliver her people through the death of Holofernes. Since no man has been found to dare his life in Holofernes' camp, she must wait in prayer and humility until the way is shown to her. She sees no way except through sin, but suddenly even this way appears glorified to her by the will of God, who can make the unclean clean; she has cast herself "into the eternal," and she believes in the truth of her answer. It is just because she, as a woman, does not remain on this height of spiritual inspiration, but later falls, as woman alone, and avenges her insulted womanhood, — it is for this reason that she is at the end a representative of the tragic fate of woman more than a tool in Jehovah's hands. Her people greet her as their liberator, mingling her name with that of the great God of Israel, while she only feels the shame of her dishonored womanhood, and the stigma in her deed of personal vengeance. But though it is her person and personality that interest us almost absolutely in the play, still here, too, we have the ever clear background of a religious struggle, the struggle of a developed monotheism against a heathen polytheism, which, through the impious sin of Nebuchadnezzar and his general, becomes the most degraded form of monotheism.

Of "Genoveva," Hebbel said that it was a second part of "Judith," showing the passive sacrifice, the saint, as "Judith" showed the active sacrifice, the heroine, and thus together they close the circle of the Jewish-Christian view of life. In the severe criticism to which he subjected the drama in his ripper years, he realizes the strange way in which heaven and hell are intermingled, but he claims, too, that they are joined together through inner relationship according to the fundamental conditions of Christianity.¹ The whole play is imbued with the military and religious ardor of the crusades, with a zealous

¹ Bw. II. 50.

hatred of heathens and Jews, of every enemy to Christianity. An entire scene in the second act is devoted to a vivid presentation of the Jewish persecution, through the introduction of one molested member of the race. Genoveva is the Christian martyr, though persecuted by her own people; she has been filled from childhood with the desire for the life of a religieuse, and only her sister's horrible fate has warned and terrified her away from the cloister. At heart as pure and chaste as a nun, she marries Siegfried, and the spark of human love is kindled within her. There is scarcely a page in the play that does not contain a Biblical or other religious reference, that does not help to make us intimate with the religious background against which the characters are drawn.

Together with his "Moloch" and his "Christus," "Judith" and "Genoveva" were to form a great drama of the past, according to Hebbel's youthful plan.¹ In "Moloch" was to be represented, in grandly terrible and gloomy pictures, the earliest beginnings of religion and culture, of a worship inspired through fear, of a religion which should spring up among the Germans out of the ruins of Carthage, and which, under the guidance of Hamilcar's son, Hieram, should lead its followers on to the vengeance of Carthage in the destruction of Rome. In a letter to Kühne, January 28, 1847, Hebbel writes of his plan: "I want to depict the process of the beginnings of religious and political relations, a process which continues to our very day, even though it has been appreciably modified through the centuries, and my hero is the one named in the title. Rome and Carthage only form the background, like two crossing swords, and even the primitive German conditions are only to give the necessary color pigments to a representation which will not fade into indistinctness."² Here, then, had Hebbel brought his work to completion, we should have had a struggle of religion with dying heathendom, not simply as a background for the action, but as the very action itself, and the god Moloch as the hero. The cruel iron god, with his arms of fire, was to represent the embodiment of a belief in higher forces, and to lead the advance to the earliest material beginnings of culture,

¹ Bw. I. 156.

² Nachl. I. 209.

but he was also to pave the way to the first inception of a deeper, more inward form of worship, when the great iron mass should stand merely for a symbol of the god who had brought them prosperity, a god to whom human sacrifice would no longer be made.

The few pages which contain all that Hebbel noted down of his material for a drama with Christ as the hero give us little definite idea of how the drama would have unfolded itself. But this we know, that Hebbel considered the "Christus" almost as a continuation of the "Moloch," in which he would depict the beginning of a definite religion, as opposed to the beginning of religion itself. Of this definite religion, Christ was to be the purely human head, the Christ of whom he had written to Elise in his Munich period: "Christ is for me a high — perhaps the highest — moral presence in history; the one man who became great through suffering. Because Judaism and heathendom had not gone far enough, I forgive him for going too far."¹ In the two short scenes, and the few suggestive sentences which he has left us, we see his intention of surrounding Christ with various Biblical characters: Mary, his mother, Anna, Mary of Magdala, John, and, in contrast to the principal character, Satan. Hebbel seems to have taken up his old plan to make Christ the centre of a drama most energetically directly after the printing of the "Nibelungen," and quite probably he intended here to develop the ideas expressed by Dietrich von Bern, and to represent the kingdom of him in whose name Dietrich took upon himself Etzel's sceptre and rule.

In yet another drama, though in a less marked form, does Hebbel represent the old giving place to the new. It is in the last scene of "Herodes und Mariamne," with Herod a lonely, loveless monarch, face to face with the actuality of his own crime, that Hebbel introduces the symbolic feature of the three wise men — "kings" — in their search for the new-born child, before whom all knees shall bend; the child of whom Sameas, in his martyrdom, has just prophesied that his time has come, that the virgin mother is even now laying in the manger; the

¹ Bw. I. 64.

child of the house of David who will overturn thrones, wake the dead, tear the stars from the heavens, and rule the world in all eternity.

These are the dramas in which religion appears most prominently as background, or as formative motive, but we have religious characters and Biblical reference and suggestion in still other dramas by Hebbel. There is a breath of middle-class Protestantism in "Maria Magdalena," and the hypocritical Leonhard shows a smirk of satisfaction in his glib ability to refer to the innocence of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent, and to Jacob's wooing of Rachel. In "Michel Angelo" no religious problem presents itself, it is true, but it is the pope, as representative of the Romish church, who reconciles the arts, and who opens the path for the union of painting and sculpture with religion, to produce the greatest creations on canvas and in marble. In "Agnes Bernauer" there is an undercurrent of catholic belief, of reference to the Bible and to the almighty power of God; and even in the unfinished "Demetrius" we are shown the active power of the orthodox church in the worldly side of life.

In closing his letter of January 21, 1861, to Pastor Luck, Hebbel wrote of his "Nibelungen," "It depicts the victory of Christianity over heathendom." And this struggle between the dying forms and customs of the old with the higher ideals and beliefs of the new religion is, indeed, the background upon which Hebbel has painted the whole picture of German love and loyalty, the background which deepens the significance of characters and events, and which offers reconciliation for the horrors of the tragic outcome. The time is that of transition; the people are people of the transition from heathendom to Christianity, not, on the one hand, obstinate heathens, nor, on the other hand, steadfast Christians, but, for the most part, not ideal representatives of either the Germanic heathen belief or of Christianity, just as the time is not representative of one belief or the other, but rather of the change from one to the other. The chief characters are touched with the forms of religion alone, while deep in their hearts they retain the old Germanic standards of loyalty and blood vengeance.

Uechtritz, upon reading the first scenes of the "Nibelungen," took exception to the manner in which Hebbel had made Hagen a mocker of Christ and the forms of Christian religion, and this in the very scene where the epic has him swear "wizze Krist." Apart from the offence to his religious feelings, he thought that it opposed the "atmosphere" of the poem, and since he did not see where else in the drama the subject of Christianity could be brought in, he felt that such scorn had no place there.¹ Hebbel's reply was that he would be contented if only the whole tragedy were not regarded as too Christian, and reminded Uechtritz of the chaplain in the first part of the Nibelungen, and of Rüdiger in the second part, whom Uechtritz seemed to have forgotten when he looked in vain for an offset for the mockery of Hagen, whose swearing by Christ, Hebbel declared, could trouble him but little, since Hagen later threw the chaplain overboard in an attempt to drown him.² He enclosed a part of the last scene of "Siegfrieds Tod," and Uechtritz's reply said that Hebbel was right, that not a few critics would reproach him for a too pronounced Christianity, and that he himself found the dogma of human sin almost too accentuated in a specifically Protestant sense, since the time of the Nibelungen, or the century in which the epic arose, could scarcely have reached the point of thus seeing the "sinner" in Siegfried.³

But when he knew the entire trilogy, Uechtritz praised particularly the Christian notes which resound in the drama, and which he found to be not merely of a sincerity, but also of a genuineness and truth such as he would scarcely have regarded possible from one who held the position that Hebbel claimed to hold towards the Christian religion and who insisted upon calling it a "mythology among other mythologies."⁴ Hebbel, however, declared that his position had not changed, that Christianity was still what it had been for him, and that his renewed studies had made him add "not even the deepest among the mythologies," and if, as Uechtritz had said, he had succeeded in portraying its innermost being, it was simply through the same power that had enabled him to depict the valkyrie life

¹ Bw. II. 241.

² *Ibid.* 247.

³ *Ibid.* 248.

⁴ *Ibid.* 287.

in Iceland. After the completion of his "Nibelungen," he had begun to dream of his tragedy of Christ, and in his desire to be able to master the material, he had recapitulated his theological studies, but with even more negative results than before.¹

Hebbel has but three characters in the "Nibelungen" who can be regarded as absolute representatives of the beliefs for which they stand. Frigga alone is the pure representative of heathendom, untainted by an approach of Christian belief. The chaplain is, for the first half, as Dietrich for the second half, the absolute representative of the Christian faith. Yet a remnant of heathen belief clings to Dietrich, for he has his wisdom, his hints of future events, his presentiments, from the mysterious conversation that he heard at the well of the Nixies. Rüdiger, too, represents the Christian religion consistently, but his rôle as Christian hero is scarcely more emphasized here than in the epic. The other characters are hardly more than tinged with the new faith which the chaplain, in long demonstrations and admonitions, earnestly tries to inculcate; they are under the surface influence of Christianity, bound to an observance of its forms, but they chafe under any restraint which it puts upon their freedom or their pleasure, and at heart they are "healthy heathen," who, when their emotions are stirred, when they are stung, or angered, or wronged, show promptly the old, elemental desire for blood and revenge. Frigga feels that the old world of her faith is slipping away, though her allegiance remains steadfast to her ancient gods. Brunhild cries out in surprise at her sacrificial offerings to the old gods, who are now but as devils in hell, and Frigga replies:—

Fürchtest Du
 Sie darum weniger? Sie können uns
 Noch immer fluchen, wenn auch nicht mehr segnen,
 Und willig schlacht' ich ihnen ihren Bock.
 O, thätest Du es auch!

The chaplain, too, realizes that this is but a period of transition, that his religion has not yet reached the hearts and lives

¹ Bw. II. 291.

of the people. For when Siegfried announces the approach of Brunhild as Gunther's bride, he asks: —

Verzeiht mir, edler Recke,
Ist Brunhild denn getauft?

And to Siegfried's reply that she is baptized he again asks: —

So ist's ein christlich Land, aus dem sie kommt?

Siegfried answers: —

Man ehrt das Kreuz,

and the chaplain, grieved at the lack of positiveness in Siegfried's assertion, sorrowfully adds:—

Man ehrt's wohl so, wie hier,
Wo man sich's neben einer Wodans-Eiche
Gefallen lässt, weil man nicht wissen kann,
Ob ihm kein Zauber inne wohnt, so wie
Der frömmste Christ ein Götzenbild noch immer
Nicht leicht zerschlägt, weil sich ein letzter Rest
Der alten Furcht noch leise in ihm regt,
Wenn er es glotzen sieht.

And Iring, from the heathen standpoint, tells of the recentness of the change which has dethroned the old gods:—

und wenn's mich auch einmal verdriesst
Dass dieser Reif nicht länger blitzt, wie sonst,
So tret' ich rasch in Wodans Eichenhain,
Und denk' an den, der mehr verloren hat!

In lines which Hebbel later cut out for reasons of stage economy, Dietrich symbolically expresses the meaning of the present age and the events which it has brought forth:—

Das Vergangene
Ringt aus dem Grabe und das Künftige
Drängt zur Geburt, das Gegenwärt'ge aber
Setzt sich zur Wehre.

How well Hebbel understood the circumstances attendant upon a change of religious belief is shown in his treatment of the old gods. For it is a well-known fact of demonology that the gods of the old religion are accepted as devils by the new, either in their entirety or in some of their attributes. So in

the "Nibelungen," the old gods sit in hell or in Hekla, the volcano which northern superstition regarded as the entrance to hell.¹ Hagen is the most frankly heathen of the Burgundians. That first scene of the Prologue which Uechtritz criticised shows in clear outline the brave, bold, defiant knight, who resents the interference with a hunt which is caused by the celebration of Easter, and who shows a scornful and wilful ignorance of sacred festivals.

Ute and Kriemhild, in particular, show profound respect for church observances, and had Kriemhild's lines fallen in the pleasant ways of domestic happiness, where she confidently expected to find them when she gave herself to Siegfried, she would have gone through life a pious Christian, erecting altars to saints in thanks for blessings received and in the hope of blessings to come; following to the letter the teachings of the chaplain and attending to every prescribed church duty. But she finds that this new religion not only does not bring her the peaceful life of love on which she has launched, but when this happiness has been snatched from her, it denies her the truth and right, the justice and judgment that she seeks, telling her that what she desires is vengeance, and that vengeance is reserved for the Lord. And so the years of brooding sorrow, of clamors unheard, of injustice added to wrong, years in which her religion, the religion of the chaplain, makes no sign of giving her the one thing for which she now lives, these years prepare her to accept the relentless heathen, Etzel, as the man who will bring her plans to fulfilment.

Throughout the play we find the distinction made in the minds of the characters between heathen and Christian; there is a constant reference to God, the Lord, the Creator, the Saviour, and Christ, to the cross and heaven and paradise, to hell and the devil and Satan, and to the day of judgment. We hear of religious customs and the observance of them, of church and cathedral and cloister, of the priest and his cowl and of the pope, of mass and prayer and fasting, of holy water, and of religious festivals. Yet there are but few scenes which are imbued with the true spirit of Christianity, and they are chiefly

¹ 675 f., 686 f., 750; cf. Grimm, 953.

those which contain the chaplain's earnest words. Rüdiger fears to lose his soul by participating in the final combat; and Kriemhild realizes that she lost hers according to Christian teachings by her second marriage, but the elemental passions of her soul are not to be checked by a new religion that has never entered into her inner life. Etzel best expresses the Christian ideal, to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"; it admonishes, "resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Thus Etzel simply tells his idea of the Christian teaching:—

Ich hörte ja von Dir,
Das Eure Weise sei, den Feind zu lieben
Und mit dem Kuss zu danken für den Schlag:
Ei nun, ich hab's geglaubt.

Dietrich acknowledges the truth of the ideal, but he knows that every one is not strong enough to fulfil it. So Hebbel has elsewhere said of himself, "I pledge myself to understand all creatures; to love them is beyond my power, as also many another Christian command."¹ Even Hagen has a faint conception of the teaching, for, in admitting his envy of the strong, beautiful hero who had playfully plucked all their honors with a look that said, "I do not want them," who had wrung from Hagen his hard-won prowess, he says:—

Dann küsse Deinen Feind, wenn Du's vermagst.

It is this very fact that Hebbel has taken such delicate care to portray, the fact that these heathen, with their superficial touch of Christianity, with their more or less willing acceptance of its outward forms without any real conception of the acceptance of its ideals as life principles, these representatives of the old ideas of revenge and bloodshed, must be overthrown for the dawn of a new era.

It is remarkable, too, how those characters who have been most strongly touched by the Christian teachings have been influenced to conversion, not by the gentle persistence of preach-

¹ Bw. II. 29.

ing, but by some extraordinary phenomenon. Thus the chaplain, a heathen, born of a race of heathen, had helped to kill the first messenger of God who had come among them. His arm dealt the last blow, and then he heard the martyr's prayer as he prayed for him, and died with the Amen on his lips. With that, the chaplain threw away his sword, and went forth to preach the cross, and since that day he has never used the arm that helped to slay the man of God. Even he, with his gentle mildness, and his doctrine of love from the Gospels, had been so good a heathen that it required a revolution of mind and heart to bring him to cast away utterly his heathen impulses and beliefs.

Etzel, too, as we first know him, is far more a Christian than the form-observing Burgundians. Kriemhild had heard of his wild, fierce deeds before her marriage; when she heard his name, she thought first of fire and blood, and then of a man; his reputation was that of a breaker and despiser of customs and usage. She had thought of him as born to love such deeds as the one of vengeance which she had planned on Hagen, but she had thought of him as he was. Etzel himself tells her of the fearful apparition which had drawn him from the Rome he had come to conquer, and which had made him beg for the blessings of the pope whom he had sworn to slay. All this has sunk so deeply into his heart that no bloody project entices him. Yet when his own, his only child and heir, is cruelly murdered, the old passions come sweeping over him in a tidal wave, his true nature, no longer subdued by the effects of the terrible phenomenon, asserts itself, and now he is ready to show them all the savage wildness and relentlessness which characterized him when, unacquainted with civilization, he broke forth from his desert.

Dietrich's connection with Etzel's realm and with the final outcome of the struggle has an element of the symbolic. He came of his own free will to serve at Etzel's court, just seven years before the last events take place; he, the mightiest of the world, had come and laid his sword and crown before Etzel; thus his entrance into Etzel's service coincides in time with Kriemhild's second marriage, and from the fact of this

mysterious coincidence, as well as from the part that Dietrich plays in the development of the tragedy, we feel there is something symbolic, something beyond mere human ken, in his presence among the Huns. He tells Iring and Thüring that the day draws nigh when they shall learn his reasons for coming. Every one recognizes his physical prowess and moral greatness; they look to him as though he were there to set a dam to fire and water, and to point the right way to sun and moon. Hildebrant knows that Dietrich has vowed service for a definite period. And the time is now over, so he begs him to interfere in the struggle, and Dietrich, in a half-acknowledgment that he has seen this final struggle from the first, declares that if the heroes die he will remain what he is, for this he had placed as a sign whether he should again bear the crown or remain a vassal until his death. He chooses the part of onlooker at the struggle, and voluntarily renews his vow of service until death. Only when Etzel himself is about to take active part in the fight does he feel forced to assume the rôle of combatant, and when Etzel, in sorrow and the powerlessness of despair, begs Dietrich to take the crown, his acceptance is in the name of Him who died on the cross.

4. THE MYTHICAL AND MYSTICAL

As a wholly subordinate, though exceedingly important part of the drama, Hebbel regarded an admixture of the mystical, and this admixture lay preëminently in the material before him. "How far does the marvellous, the mystical, belong in modern poetic art?" he asks in his journal for March 11, 1847; and replies to his own question: "Only in so far as it remains elementary. That is, the gloomy, ominous feelings and fancies on which it rests, and which tremble before something hidden and secret in nature, before an inherent capacity of deviating from her course, may be aroused, but they must not be moulded into concrete forms, such as apparitions of ghosts and spirits; for the world-consciousness has outgrown the belief in the latter, while those feelings themselves are of everlasting nature." ¹

As early as his student days in Munich, he had thought over the subject of the use of the mystical and with similar conclusions: "We mortals are assuredly capable of fear and presentiment; the poet, therefore, is certainly permitted to make use also of such motives as he can obtain only from these dim regions. But two things he must observe. In the first place, he must here less than ever fall into the purely capricious, for then he becomes absurd. This he avoids by listening to the voices of the people and of the saga, and creating only from those elements which they, who have long listened to everything really awesome in nature, have hallowed. In the second place, he must guard against creating such fantastic pictures as only concern a single person, perhaps him whom he connects with them in his poem, in order to make them everywhere active; only that spectral circle do I fear before whose eddies I am not safe."¹

In 1845, while in Rome, he had read and criticised two of Calderon's dramas, and, in doing so, had emphasized the necessity for establishing and humanizing mystery if it be used in poetry, and in avoiding the method of treating it like a magic ring which is put on the finger and which then produces new wonders.²

A certain symbolism he felt, moreover, to be an effectual part of the drama, not simply in its idea, but in every one of its elements, and it was his aim to raise the merely anecdotal to the symbolical.³

In nearly all of Hebbel's plays we see an element of mysticism and symbolism, that "mystic breath," that "ominous mixture of light and shade, which is most compatible with the intrepidity of his thinking."⁴ It is some unknown vision of terror which has appeared to Judith's husband in the wedding night, an equally mysterious apparition has maddened Klaus in "Genoveva," and has turned Etzel from his deeds of savage bloodshed. Symbolic, too, in "Judith," are the forms of Samuel, who must go about crying out vengeance against himself, and of Daniel, the dumb, whose tongue is loosened so long as Jehovah requires his service. Symbolic is the defiance of

¹ Tgb. I. 1055. ² Tgb. III. 3297. ³ Tgb. II. 2414, 3158. ⁴ Kuh, I. 178.

death by which Golo seeks a sign whether he shall perish unsullied or live a villain. Symbolic is the consecration of his sword by Genoveva, and Golo's later breaking of it; mysterious is the witchcraft of old Margaretha and her deception of Siegfried by means of the "glass of truth." In "Herodes und Mariamne," we have the symbolic entrance of the three kings, heralding a new era, and the vision of the new era which is dawning. In "Gyges und sein Ring" prevails the deep symbolism and mysticism which prepares us for the use of the symbolic and the mysterious in the "Nibelungen." Werner, in his introduction to the tragedy, points out how Hebbel has refined the use of the veil, and symbolized its significance by making it a part of Rhodope's very being, and how he has employed the diamond about her neck in his characteristic and deeply mysterious manner; how he has made use of the ring of invisibility as an expressed symbol of the sort that the poet valued so highly, but as symbol only, for never does Hebbel allow one of his symbols to act as formative motive, but only as a human adjunct.

Friedrich von Uechtritz, in his splendid letter of criticism on "Gyges," understood how to regard and to value this employment of mystic elements. "There is, of course, in the material, something of that strange, remote, and unusual element by which you are evidently wont to be especially attracted; not so much by far as this is the case, for example, in Kleist's Penthesilea, but still touching slightly upon it. Only here the welcome difference is especially set forth, that this time everything has been done on your part, in order not to increase what is strange and remote in the material through the execution, but rather to alleviate, to place it in a light, a coloring, a significance, which acts as intermediary between it and our feelings, and forms the poem over to an experience which is close to us in spirit, which corresponds to our narrow circles of civilization and of feeling."¹

Vischer, as we have seen, particularly emphasized the advantages for operatic treatment which the Nibelungen offered in its mythical elements, and Hebbel was not afraid to employ

¹ Bw. II. 226.

this mythical background as Geibel had been; he grasped eagerly at the opportunity of portraying his human characters with the old mythical setting, as giving the ancient atmosphere to the whole which is necessary to cast the natural light and the glow of belief on the gigantic outlines of the heroes.

Hebbel, then, did not shrink from explaining Brunhild's mysterious origin and position in the transition-world and by so doing adding new inventive touches to her history and meaning as a changeling of divine origin. Dietrich, too, explains, in the lines which were later stricken out, the history of Siegfried's birth, and their joint significance. The child which is conceived in the one favorable moment of a thousand years, draws into himself the strength of all animals, and while still in the cradle breaks iron as the strongest man breaks wood. At the moment of his conception, the bride is wakened for him who shall bear him wonder-children, and threaten the world with destruction. Then the threatened world rouses to defence, and produces the human bride who is to fight with the super-human creature, and who, if she gains the victory, will let the world move on in peace another thousand years; but these three must die in the struggle of the old with the new, the last desperate fight of the dying age against the incoming belief and culture of the dawning era. It is an assertion of the fact that after great periods of time the world's opinions and beliefs change, and that with each change occurs a struggle, a combat, when the leaders in the struggle must be sacrificed for the general progress. Dietrich's whole connection with the play breathes a symbolical import, as though he were placed in the world, a man of surpassing moral and physical greatness, to await the crucial moment of decision, and to set his seal on the final outcome, by standing as the representative of the new faith. Mysterious is the knowledge which he had acquired at the Nixie's well, when the world's great changes were recounted, and when he heard a year named. Is this the year for which he is waiting at the end of his seven years of service? Is he a conscious regulator of the world's woes, a reformer, with his inspiration for reformation imbibed at the Nixie's well? To all these questions we are given no definite answer. It is intended as a part of the

breath of mystery which casts its veil over the great forms in the "Nibelungen," and makes us believe in their marvellous deeds, and realize their true symbolic importance in the world-drama.

Symbolic, too, is the figure of the Pilgrim, the representative of the extreme phase of the modern belief; in reality a proud duke who wanders from house to house begging for a blow for his misdeeds, and a piece of bread for his hunger. A man, who, seized by the pangs of an over-sensitive conscience, thinks himself unworthy of the throne, and the wife and the children that have fallen to his lot, and who, therefore, turns away from his door-sill even after ten years of begging, and continues his life of wandering poverty. Symbolic, also, is the use of the silent figure of Eckewart, loyally devoted to his mistress, yet striving to warn the Burgundians.

Nor does Hebbel shrink from the single mythical features which are so much a part of the whole that one must simply take them for granted as believed and not attempt to explain them. So we have the dragon episode, with all its attendant circumstances as a matter of past history, and Siegfried enters as the possessor of hoard and *Tarnkappe*, protected by a skin of horn, and understanding the speech of birds. Where Hebbel perhaps overstepped the mark in giving to his heroes their superhuman wrapping, was in ascribing to Siegfried the size of a giant, and to Dietrich superhuman physical strength. Neither feature was necessary for delineating the two characters, nor for our understanding of them, and each one offers difficulties for stage presentation.

The symbolic feature of the dwarfs, those dwellers in caverns and in the bowels of the earth, as guardians of the wonderful hoard, is emphasized in the scene in which they bear the treasure to Worms; and the curse on the hoard which the writer of the Nibelungenlied did not know of, is brought out in the marvellous vision of Volker, where he sees the destruction-bringing power of the gold, and sketches its history. Still earlier, in "Kriemhilds Rache," Hagen, with his far-seeing eye of gloom, had realized its evil power:—

Die Nibelungen haben ihren Vater
 Um Gold erschlagen, um dasselbe Gold,
 Das Siegfried an den Rhein gebracht. Wer hätte
 Sich's wohl gedacht, bevor sie's wirklich thaten?
 Doch ist's gescheh'n und wird noch oft gescheh'n.¹

And even when the gold was first brought, the knight Truchs had recalled the old saying that magic gold is still more thirsty for blood than a dried sponge for water.

Hebbel delights, too, in emphasizing the magic power of the runes, and in retaining the significant dreams of the old epic, and even adding new ones, such as that of Volker, where he sees all the Burgundians bleeding from wounds, but each with his wound in the back, as though it had been given by a murderer, not by a warrior. The prophecy of the mermaids is also given a place in the darkening picture of approaching destruction, and Hebbel has, as we have seen, intended a somewhat similar, though far more symbolical and far-reaching prophecy in the reported scene at the Nixie's well, where the later events are shadowed forth in mysterious and interrupted whisperings. The Norse god-world is introduced, not simply to supply the deficiencies of the epic transmission, but also to give the background of the old belief which is dying out slowly but surely.

Hebbel's frequent fault, throughout his dramas, was in emphasizing and enlarging upon the mysterious and symbolical, rather than keeping it in the background. So here Dietrich's significance did not need heightening through the Nixie's prophecies, nor did his meaning as Christian hero gain by this touch of old Germanic mythology and magic. Neither is the introduction of the Pilgrim a real addition to the play, for we have heard of this extreme side of Christianity before, even of saints and penitents who creep into caves and starve, if some bird does not bring them food, or who climb steep cliffs and cling there until the wind hurls them down. He, at most, through Dietrich's explanation, and through Hagen's reply:—

Ihr sprecht, wie unser
 Kaplan am Rhein,

¹ 2884-2888.

serves to emphasize the background of Christianity against which the emotions of hatred and desire for vengeance are playing their deadly rôle.

Certain minor touches of mystery and mysticism which have already been mentioned under the head of inventions rather detract from than add to the general effect: so the invented mythological details and the features given to the Nibelungen knights and to the Burgundian warriors.

Yet Hebbel was justified in defending the humanness of his characters, for the mystical and mythical impress us in most cases as a part of the atmospheric setting; and he was right when he declared that he had never permitted himself to borrow a motive from the dark region of indeterminate and indeterminate forces; that he had confined himself to catching up the wonderful lights and colors which steep our actually existing world in a new splendor without changing it. "The Gyges is possible without the ring, the Nibelungen is possible without the horned skin and the Tarn-cap."¹

Whatever Hebbel's faults in the dramatization of the Nibelungenlied, they are those of detail rather than of ensemble, for each character stands out clearly and humanly in the great aggregate, and he has saved his structures from an epic recitation of detail and episode which the nature of the material made it difficult to avoid.

The merit of Hebbel is that he has succeeded in retaining the marvellous mythical background without making his characters either impossible monsters or demigods; that he has humanized without trivializing them; that he has made them step out of the epic mass of his material as real dramatic characters, living, breathing, speaking, and acting before us; that he has retained the outlines of the characters and the action as no other dramatizer of the material has done; and that he has strengthened, and motivated, and deepened both characters and plot, and raised the whole to a world-drama of universal significance, while retaining in unblemished purity the picture offered in the Nibelungenlied.

¹ Bw. II. 189; Tgb. IV. 6085.

CHAPTER VI

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